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ROB OF THE BOWL:

A LEGEND OF ST. INIGOE'S.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"SWALLOW BARN," "HORSE-SHOE ROBINSON," &c.

Daniel. Quot homines tot sententiæ.
Martin. And what is that?
Daniel. 'Tis Greek, and argues difference of opinion.
John Woodvil.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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ROB OF THE BOWL:

A LEGEND OF ST. INIGOE'S.

CHAPTER I.

Some with the ladies in their chambers ply
Their bounding elasticity of heel,
Evolving as they trip it whirlingly,
The merry mazes of th' entangled reel.

ANSTER FAIR.

"You wear a sword, sir, and so do I!"
"Well, sir!"
"You know the use, sir, of a sword?"
"I do, to whip a knave, sir."

THE HUNCHBACK.

THE festival of St. Therese, Blanche's birth-day, so anxiously looked for by the younger inhabitants of St. Mary's, and scarcely less heartily welcomed by the elder, at length came round. Towards sunset of an evening, mild in temperature and resplendent with the glorious golden-tipped clouds of the

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October sky, the air fraught with that joyful freshness which distinguishes this season in Maryland, groups of gay-clad persons were seen passing on the high road that led from the town to the Rose Croft. The greater number, according to the usage of that day, rode on horseback, the women seated on pillions behind their male escort. Some of the younger men trudged on foot, and amongst these was even seen, here and there, a buxom damsel cheerily making her way in this primitive mode of travel and showing by her merry laugh and elastic step how little she felt the inconvenience of her walk.

It must not be supposed from this account that the luxury of the coach was altogether unknown to the good people of the province. Two of these vehicles were already within the dominions of the Lord Proprietary; one belonging to his Lordship himself, and the other to Master Thomas Notley, of Notley Hall, member of the Council, and sometime, during the Proprietary's late visit to London, the Lieutenant-General of the province. They were both of the same fashion, stiff, lumbering, square old machines which had been imported some twenty years past, and were often paraded in the street of St. Mary's with their bedizened postillions and footmen, to the no inconsiderable enhancement, in the eyes of the burghers, of the dignity and state of their possessors. The bountiful foresight and supreme authority, it may be said, of the Lady Maria had procured the aid of both of these accommodations for the service of the evening, and they were, accordingly,

now plying backward and forward between the Port and the Collector's, for the especial ease and delectation of sundry worshipful matrons whose infirmities rather inclined them to avoid the saddle, and also for the gratification of such favourites of the good lady, amongst the younger members of the population, as she vouchsafed to honour by this token of her regard. By the help of these conveniences a considerable number of guests had been set down, at the scene of festivity, a full hour before sunset—this early convocation being in strict conformity with the social usages by which our ancestors were accustomed, on occasions of jollity, to take time by the forelock.

The fame of the preparations at the Rose Croft had attracted, in addition to the invited guests, all such mere idlers as the humbler ranks of the townspeople supplied. These were chiefly congregated about the principal gateway, drawn thither by their desire to witness the coming of the visiters and to gratify that inquisitive love of observation at the display of holiday finery, which furnishes so large a fund of marvel to those whose lot excludes them from participating in its exhibition. This crowd was composed of serving-men and maids, idle apprentices and vagrant strollers, of both sexes, with a due admixture of ragged, bare-legged boys, who drove a business of some little gain, by taking charge of the horses of such as dismounted at the verge of the enclosure that surrounded the dwelling. In their estimation Willy of the Flats, ordinarily a comrade

of the idle craft, but now elevated into a character of some importance on a theatre of higher honour, was a personage at the present moment of no mean consideration, and he did not fail to let his consequence be seen and felt by his old compeers. His rough shoes were greased to give them a more comely exterior, his linen, new-washed, was ambitiously displayed upon his breast, and his dilapidated garments, put in the best condition their weather-stricken service would allow, were ostentatiously freshened up with knots of parti-coloured ribands which, especially upon his veteran beaver, flared in streamers, and audibly fluttered in the zephyr that played across his brow. His fiddle, which was soon to be called into active employment, was as yet suspended to the kitchen wall in its green bag, and he strutted, in vacant leisure, across the lawn in the presence of his envying cronies at the gateway, with a vain-glorious and self-gratulating step, that showed, at least, how complacently he viewed his own exaltation, even if he did not win as much worship from the spectators.

"Troth, Michael Mossbank," he said with a significant twinkle of the eye; "but we will make dainty work of it to-night—our junketing shall be spoken of on both sides of the bay, come this many a long year. The quality themselves do not often see the like,—and the simple folks that have had the luck to to be let in, will not forget it, or I am mistaken, till the young down turns into old bristles. It is like to be a most capersome and I may say melodious

merry-making. You had no light hand, Michael, in the ordering of it."

"You may make Bible oath to that," replied the gardener; "and you would never be fore-sworn. Order it, I did, truly—the out-door work, the kitchen-work and the hall-work. Here was the trimming of hedges to make all smooth at the bank side, and the setting out of the lawn—not a straggling leaf shall you see upon it; then the herbs for the kitchen, and the flowers for the hall!—Faith it was a handful of work for a week past. If it had not been for Michael there would have been but tame sport to-night."

"Oh, but you have a great head, for such monstrous contrivances, Master Michael: you are a gardener of gardeners! Adam was of the trade before you,—but he had no jig-muster to set out, I trow, in his time:—his noddle could never have compassed it—or his five wits would have buzzed till he grew blind,—and then all his children would have given up the trade for ever after. Oh, was it not lucky for us that Father Adam was not put to the ordering of a jig muster?"

"Out, you beet-face," exclaimed the gardener, half angrily; "go put your gibes upon them that have an ear for such cracks! Why dost thou stand grinning there with thy flaunting ribands, when there is work for thee elsewhere? Look to yon gaping herd of beggars at the gate—they will presently so crowd the way that no one may enter. Look to it, until you are wanted in the hall, and you shall earn your penny-fee and broken victual the better for it."

"Out upon *thee*, Michael, thyself, for a churl, a cockle weed! I eat no broken victual, I trow, at *thy* hands: he would have scant fare who waited on thy charity. A crowder has as much worship as a spade-lifter any day in the year—so, cock your nose at some one below you!"

"A jest for a gibe, Willy," returned the gardener good humouredly; "a jest for a gibe! Play turkey cock and swell to your heart's content!—and when you have let off your spite go to the gate where you are wanted. Go, friend Willy,—I would not vex you, in faith."

The fiddler, after this short and ruffling encounter, having regained his equanimity, and not displeased at the chance of showing his importance to the loiterers about the gate, went to the post assigned to him; where, with a self-complacent tone of admonition, he addressed the assemblage, consisting of some dozen auditors, with a discourse upon the behaviour expected of them on this interesting occasion both by himself and the master of the feast.

Prominent amongst those upon whom this instruction was bestowed, was one who had ever regarded Willy with singular deference: this was a lean and freckled lad, just on the verge of manhood, whose unmeaning eye, relaxed fibre and ever present smile denoted a stinted intellect, whilst his unoffending inquisitiveness gained him admission to the skirts of all gatherings, whether festive or sad. His restless foot and characteristic thirst for knowledge habitu-

ally impelled him to seek the most conspicuous post of observation, and he was now, accordingly, in the foremost rank of Willy's hearers. Wise Watkin, (for by this name he was familiarly greeted by young and old,) notwithstanding the parsimony with which nature had doled out to him the gift of wit, was remarkable for his acquaintance with all classes of persons, and for a certain share of cunning in picking up the shreds of whatever rumour might chance, for the time, to agitate the gossip of the town: he was still more remarkable for his inordinate admiration of the fiddler.

Willy had just concluded his lecture of advice to his cronies, when his attention was arrested by the rumble of wheels heard at a distance, and by a cloud of dust which was seen rising in the neighbouring wood through which the road lay from the town.

"Hearken, neighbours,—his Lordship's coach!" he cried out. "We shall have it here anon, stuffed with people of worship. Take ranks on each side of the road—quickly, I beseech you! I will see you all cared for at the feast. Now remember, at my signal, thus,—hands to your caps, lads,—and wenches, sink:—do it comely and altogether."

"Ranks, ranks!" exclaimed Wise Watkin who, with officious alacrity, began to push the crowd into the array indicated by the fiddler. "Heed Willy, and do as he bids. I warrant you, he knows what will please the gentle-folks—hands to your caps!"

The motley ranks being formed according to the

fiddler's direction, awaited the arrival of those for whom this formal salutation was designed.

Instead of the Proprietary's coach, a few moments disclosed a cart with a little thickset, shaggy pony attached to it, coming at high gallop upon the road. On the bench above the shafts was descried the jolly figure of the landlady of the Crow and Archer, in the identical suit of green and scarlet in which we have heretofore noticed her, playing the part of charioteer. Beside her sat the terrified Garret Weasel who, of too light bulk to maintain a solid seat, jolted fearfully to and fro at every spring of the vehicle. The pony had manifestly taken the speed of his journey into his own discretion, and, with the shank of the bit gripped between his teeth, and head curved side wise, set his course doggedly for the gate, in obstinate resistance of the dame who, with both arms at stretch, reddened brow and clenched teeth, tugged at the reins, to turn him into a road that led, by a circuit, towards the rear of the dwelling, whither she was now conveying sundry articles of provision which she had undertaken to supply for the feast.

"For the Lord's sake, friends, stop the beast!" shouted the treble voice of the vintner as soon as he perceived Willy's corps—"stop us for the love of mercy!"

As the crowd gathered to arrest the runaways, a waive of the hand from the dame suspended their purpose. Her mettle was roused by the contumacy of the pony; whereupon, in disdain of the proffered aid, she gave loose rein to her beast, and, at the

same time plying her whip across his flanks, whilst her forlorn help-mate, with eyes starting from their sockets, shouted aloud for help, flew through the gateway with increased velocity,—a broad smile playing upon the face of the dame as she cried out to the lookers on,—"Never heed the babe, a gay ride will mend his health."

The address of the landlady in safely passing through the narrow way, elicited a general burst of applause, which rang in shouts until she had fairly got the better of the self-will of her four footed antagonist, and had halted him, panting, at the back of the house.

"By my gossip," exclaimed Willy; "it was no such great mistake to set down dame Dorothy's tumbrel for my Lord's coach! If it had been a coach and six it could not have made more dust or better speed."

"It could not, on my conscience!" shouted Wise Watkin, in a shrill response to Willy's laugh.—"There's a tickle to the ribs!—that fiddler Willy should take dame Dorothy's cart and bow-necked Bogle for my Lord's coach!"—and with this reflection he joined still louder in the chorus which echoed the general merriment, not doubting that the laugh was occasioned by Willy's mistake.

Mean time the company continued to arrive. The coaches came with new freights, and fresh parties on horseback alighted at the gate. The Collector, more than usually precise in apparel, stood at the door receiving the frequent comers with all that particularity of observance which so strongly marked

the manners of the past century; and group after group was ushered into the hall. Here Mistress Alice, in sad-coloured, silken attire, plain and becoming in its fashion, gave welcome to her visiters; whilst the Lady Maria, in character of what might be termed the patroness of the revel, took post by her side. The neat little figure of the Proprietary's sister received a surprising accession of bulk from the style of her dress, which was according to a mode yet new in the province. Her hair, laid flat and smooth upon the crown of the head, was tortured into a sea of curls that fell over either ear to the point of the shoulder, and to the same depth upon the back, fringing her brow with light and fleecy flakes—the whole powdered to a pearly, brownish hue, and inlaid with jewelled bands. Her gown, both body and skirt, was of rich, flowered tabby, whose coruscating folds rustled with portentous dignity, as the lady moved slowly from place to place. This derived still greater increment of stateliness from a stomacher and huge farthingale, or hoop, made after a fashion which the queen of Charles the Second, nearly twenty years before, had brought from Portugal and introduced to the wondering eyes of the merry court dames of England. The glory of this array gave a world of condescension to the deep and awfully formal courtesy with which the benevolent spinster made her salutations to the freshly arriving troops; who, in their turn, it was obvious, were duly impressed with the grandeur of the accost,

and did full homage to the claims of the lady as the presiding genius of the ball.

Blanche Warden, with a playfulness that vibrated between the woman and the girl, abandoned the reception of the guests to the elders of the family, and gave herself up to the guidance of her prevailing humour, as she appeared, at one moment, in the hall smiling amidst the congratulations of friends, and at another, skimming across the lawn with a dozen of her school-mates in the random flight of their wild fancies. Her dress was characterized by the simplicity of a maiden as yet unambitious to assume the privileges of womanhood. It consisted of a boddice of light blue velvet accurately fitted to her shape, and laced across the bosom with silken cords, the tasseled extremities of which depended almost to the ground; short white sleeves looped to the shoulder by bands of the colour of the boddice; a skirt of white lawn sparingly trimmed with blue, and divested of that cumbrousness of volume which belonged to the costume of women of that day; and a low white slipper disclosing a foot and ankle of faultless proportions. Her neck and shoulders, of matchless beauty, were given uncovered to the evening breeze; and her glossy hair, constrained above her brow by a fillet of blue riband, fell in rich volume down her back. No jewel or jem contributed its lustre to grace her person; but a bouquet of choice flowers planted on the upper verge of the boddice, and a white rose nestling amongst the braided tresses on her forehead, better than carcanet

or chain of gold, diamond clasp or ear-ring, consorted with the virgin purity and artless state of the wearer.

For a time, until the thickening shades of twilight and the keenness of the evening air began to admonish them of the comfort of the house, many of the guests, attracted by the unusual mildness of the season, loitered about the door or strolled across the grounds. Near the brink of the cliff which overlooked the river might have been seen Captain Dauntrees amusing a group of idle comrades. Here and there, a priest from the Jesuit House of St. Inigoe's, in his long cassock, diversified the general aspect of gay costumes, with a contrast grateful to the eye. The Proprietary, with the buxom old host, Mr. Warden, and the aged Chancellor, essayed to make merry with some venerable matrons who, with a sagacious presentiment of rheumatic visitations, were effecting a retreat towards the chimney corner of the parlour. Talbot played the gallant amongst a half score maidens, who flitted along the margin of the cliff with a clamour that almost amounted to riot, whilst in his wake, Master Benedict Leonard, as gaudy as a jay, strutted swaggeringly along, apparently but to indulge his admiration of his kinsman or to discharge some shot of saucy freedom amongst the maidens.

With the lighting of candles the first notes of Willy's fiddle were heard in a bravura flourish summoning the dancers to the hall; and here the ball was opened, according to prescriptive custom, with the country-dance, which was led off by no less a per-

sonage than the Lady Maria, attended by the worshipful Collector himself as her partner, the couple affording, both in costume and movement, the richest imaginable portraiture of that "ancientry and state" which so wonderfully pleased the fancy of our progenitors. Other dances of the same character, mingled with jigs and reels, succeeded, and the company soon rose into that tone of enjoyment which the contagious merriment of the dance diffuses over all such assemblages. Cards, at that day, even more than at present, constituted the sober resource of the elder and graver portions of society of both sexes; and accordingly, by degrees, the Collector had drawn off to the parlour a respectable corps of veterans, who, grouped around the small tables, pursued this ancient pastime with that eagerness which it has always inspired amongst its votaries, leaving the hall to the unchecked mirth of the dancers.

"We heard it said that Master Cocklescraft, of the Olive Branch, was to be here to-night," said Grace Blackiston, as she encountered Blanche in the dance. "He told father Pierre that he was coming: and I have heard it whispered too, that he has brought some pretty presents with him from abroad. I do not behold him yet, and here is the evening half gone. Oh, I do long to see him, for they say he dances so well. Is he not coming?"

"He has been bidden," replied Blanche, "though not much with my will: I care not whether he comes or stays away."

"Ha, Blanche has no eye but for Master Albert,"

said the merry maiden, as she turned off and addressed herself to a school-mate who stood near; "yet a good dancer is not to be scorned now-a-days, even if the Secretary were a better. And if he were a better, he does n't dance so much that we should content ourselves with him. The Secretary has not been on the floor to-night, but must needs be tracking and trailing father Pierre about the room. I do believe he does so for no purpose but to win sights of Blanche Warden. I wonder if the dullard can be in love? It looks hugely like it."

The Secretary had, in truth, not yet mingled in the dance, but from the beginning of the evening had loitered in the hall, apparently watching the sports, and, now and then, communing with father Pierre, who, though a priestly, was far from being a silent or grave looker-on. The benevolent churchman enjoyed a commanding popularity with the younger portions of the society of the province, and took so much pleasure in the manifestation of it, that he was seldom absent from such of their gatherings as the course of his duty would allow him to attend. For the same reason he was generally to be found amongst the assemblages of his children, as he called them, rather than mingling in the graver coteries of those of his own period of life. On the present occasion he had scarcely quitted the dancing apartment during the evening, but stood by, a delighted spectator of the mirth that sparkled in the faces of the happy groups, and heard with glee, almost equal to their own, the wild laughter that echoed through the hall.

"They will presently begin to think Master Albert Verheyden intends to set himself up for a philosopher," he said, as the Secretary encountered him on the skirts of the dancers, the eye of the priest beaming with a good-natured playfulness. "It is not usual for a squire of dames to be so contemplative. My son, have you given over the company of damsels to consort with an old priest in so gay a scene as this?"

"Father, I would dance if there were need; but there is not often an empty space upon the floor, nor lack of those who seek to fill it. It pleases me as well to hold discourse with you."

"Ah, benedictus! my son, it is not at your time of life that you may gain credence for such self-denial. More than one of the maidens has put the question to me to-night, how this should come to pass."

"Reverend father, though I will not deny I love the dance, yet my nurture long made me a stranger to it; and now, since my fortune has brought me into the gay world, I scarce may conquer the diffidence I feel to exhibit myself in such unaccustomed exercise."

"It is an innocent pleasure, son Albert, and a graceful. There is healthful virtue in these laughing faces and active limbs. St. Ignatius forbid that I should commend an unseemly sport! but it hath ever been my belief that the young men can find no better instructers in the gentle perfections of charity and good will than in their sport-mates amongst the maidens,—and so I preach in mine office: nor, truly, may the maidens better learn how to temper their beha-

viour with the grace of pleasing—which hath in it a summary of many excellences, Master Albert—than in the fellowship of our sons. Now, away with thee! There is Blanche Warden, who has sent her eye hither a dozen times, since we have been speaking, to ask the question why I detain thee from thy duty. Ah, blessed Therese! daughter Blanche does not suspect I am chiding thee for that very fault. Go, my son; it were shame to see you so little dainty in your company to prefer the cassock to the petticoat. Go, go!"

The lively gesture of the priest and his laughing face, as he dismissed the Secretary from his side, attracted the notice of Blanche, who, as Albert Verheyden approached her, saluted him with

"I am right glad, Master Albert, that father Pierre has seen fit to bestow upon you such chiding as, with a will, I would have given you myself. I looked to you to help me through my ball to-night, and made sure of it that you would lead out some of the maidens to dance; for there are many here that have not yet had their turn:—there's Mistress Hay, the Viewer's sister,—she has sat there all night, unregarded by mortal man. Ah, Master Albert, you are no true friend to desert me in my need."

"Fair Mistress Blanche," replied the Secretary with a downcast look, "I stand under your displeasure, and acknowledge my undeserving. Indeed, my dull brain did not perceive your straits. I waited for your bidding. You will pardon me that, being trained to obedience on your command, I did not now

presume to move without it. I will away and lead forth the Viewer's sister on the instant."

"Nay, stay now: I have saved you that errand. Captain Dauntrees, upon my petition, has proffered his hand, and, you may see, they are now standing on the floor ready to begin. You shall find other duty."

"To dance with you, gentle mistress, an' it like you."

"How can it but like me, Master Albert? Oh, but I do affect this dancing! And yet, truly, I much better like it as we have danced many a time at the Rose Croft, on a winter's night, with our handful of cronies, and sister Alice to touch the spinnet to a gay tune, and you to teach us these new over-sea dances. These were pleasant hours, Master Albert, and worth a world of our stately birth-day junketings. Was it not so?"

"I love not the crowd," returned the Secretary with a lively emotion; "but these fire-side pastimes! you may praise them with your most prodigal speech, and still fall short of their just meed. We had no holiday finery there to make proud the eye, nor glozing speech to set up perfections which we did not own, nor studied behaviour to win opinion by; but what we were we seemed, and what we felt we said. There is more virtue in these hearth-side communings than you shall find in a hemisphere of shows."

"Ah, Master Albert, you have seen the gaudy world on the other side of the water, and can speak of it with assurance. Our little, unfurnished province

hath but scant pleasures for you: it is a make-believe to praise our homely hearths."

"Now, by the blessed virgin Therese! I speak, Mistress Blanche, the very breathings of my secret heart, and tell you, though little I can boast of acquaintance with that gaudy world, nothing have I seen, dreamed or tasted of worldly pleasure,—nay, nothing have I, in the wildest flight of fond imagination, ever fancied of human happiness, that might exceed the rich delight of those household scenes you speak of."

"Were they not happy!" exclaimed Blanche, kindling into a rapture excited by the fervour of the Secretary's earnest and eloquent manner. "We owe so much of it to you, Master Albert. Until you came into the province, we sometimes had a weary hour at the Rose Croft: now, my father finds it weary when you are away. I do not,—because I may surely count that it shall never be long until you are here again. —Sancta Maria! did we not stand here to dance? and, look you, our turn has past all unheeded. Truly, they will say we were both distraught! We will to the foot again and take another turn."

It was as the maiden had said. In the engrossment of their conversation they had been passed by in the country-dance. As they now went to the foot to bring themselves into place, Blanche whispered, "I rejoice the Skipper is not come to-night: his shrewdness has taught him, notwithstanding my father's good will, that there is but little relish for his company at the Rose Croft."

"You reckon without your host, Mistress Blanche," replied the Secretary. "There is the Skipper outside of the window; and not well pleased with his own ruminations, if I may judge by his folded arms and thoughtful eye."

Cocklescraft had been in the porch, looking in upon the scene, some moments before he was observed; a crowd of domestics having so pre-occupied the same station as almost to shield him from the notice of those within. Whilst Blanche and Albert now danced, he had planted himself in the door. His countenance was grave, his attitude statue-like, and his eye sharply followed the motions of the maiden. His dress, somewhat outlandish but still within the license of that period, was of a Spanish fashion, profusely decorated with embroidery and set off by jewels of exceeding richness. It was too ambitious of ornament to be compatible with good taste, and manifested that love of finery which is the infallible index of a tawdry and sensual nature. The thoughtfulness of his countenance denoted an abstraction, of which he was obviously not conscious at the moment, for he no sooner caught the glance of Blanche than his whole bearing underwent a sudden change; his eye sparkled, his lip assumed a smile, and he became at once, in appearance, the gay and careless reveller.

"God save the Rose of St. Mary's, the beautiful flower of our New World!" he said, as he approached the maiden with what she could not fail to note as an over-acted effort to assume the cavalier. "Viva la Padrona, tutta bella, tutta bona! The damsels of

Portugal will teach you the meaning of that speech, pretty mistress. St. Iago! but you have a gallant company to-night," he added, as he cast his eyes around; in doing which he recognised Albert Verheyden with a scarcely perceptible nod of the head, and then turned his back upon him. "By your leave, Mistress Blanche, I would dance with you at your first leisure: the next dance, or the next,—I am thine humble servant for as long as you will. Shall it not be the next dance, lady?"

"I will tell you anon: I know not whether I may dance again to-night, Master Cocklescraft," replied the maiden coldly.

"There spoke the same tongue that refused my mantle! Your cruelty, mistress, exceeds that beauty which all men so boast of in this province. I would that I might bring you to look upon me with compassion. Not even a dance with the queen of our feast! A poor, rough-spoken sailor meets but little grace in a lady's favour, when white-handed lute-players and ballad-singing pages stand ready at her call. It is even as you will! damsels have the privilege of denial all the world over, and I am too much of a gallant to trouble you with an unwelcome suit—"

"I will dance with you, Master Cocklescraft," said Blanche anxiously, as she saw the chafed spirit of the Skipper working in his face notwithstanding his effort to disguise it; whilst, at the same time, she feared that his peevish allusion to the Secretary might have been

overheard; "call on me for the next set, and I will dance with you."

"Now by the light, I thought your goodness would relent! 'Tis not in your nature to be unkind. Gracias! I am at your feet, Senora—I shall be on the watch. Scotch jig, reel, or country-dance, they all come pat to me. I can dance the bransle, cinquepace, or minuet—the corant, fandango, or gailliard. You shall find me at home, mistress, in every clime. Meantime, I will seek our host, the worshipful Collector: I have not seen him yet."

This unusual familiarity in the address of the Skipper, and the importunate and even offensive freedom of his manner were the result of an endeavour to conceal a discontented temper under the mask of gaiety. He had brooded over the incidents connected with his late visit to the Rose Croft, until he had wrought himself into a tone of feeling that might engender any extravagance of behaviour. The coldness of the maiden, we have seen, he imputed to causes altogether independent of her goodwill or aversion; and he was, therefore, determined to persevere in his aim to win her favour—an enterprise which, in his harsh and rude estimate of the proprieties of conduct, he did not deem in any respect hopeless. He made sure, in his reckoning, of the friendship of the Collector, from whom he had experienced those manifestations of good feeling which a hospitable and kind-hearted man flings around him almost at random, but which Cocklescraft's self-flattering temper magnified into indications of special regard.

The agitation of these topics had thrown him into a perplexed thoughtfulness which alone was the cause of his tardy appearance at the ball; and now that he had arrived, the same rumination kept him vibrating, in a moody abstraction, between total silence at one period, and an unnatural exhibition of mirth at the next, giving to the latter that gairish flippancy of manner which was so annoying to the maiden.

The cordial and frank civility with which the Collector recognised the Skipper amongst the guests, unfortunately contributed to confirm him in the opinion of Master Warden's favour.

"Why, Richard Cocklescraft," said the host, upon looking up from the cards which had been absorbing his attention, and discovering the Skipper, "art thou here amongst the grey beards? Why should you flock to the old fowl when the young are gathered in the hall? There is no gout in your toe, I warrant. Get thee back, man—we will have no deserters here! You promised to bring a blithe foot for a jig, Master Cocklescraft; art tired of the sport already?"

"In truth, worshipful Master Warden," replied the Skipper, "I have, but within this half hour, arrived at the house; 'tis not long since I left my brigantine, where matters on board detained me."

"Ha, and you have not danced to night? Then you owe Blanche a turn of duty. Go quickly back, Richard, and foot it with my girl. I have praised your leg, man, and said enough to put you on your mettle. Back to the hall, Master Cocklescraft, and

say to Blanche I sent thee for a straight-backed comrade to hold her to the pledge of a reel."

"I am already bound to that pledge, and the time is at hand to make it good. I but stole away for an instant to pay my duty here," replied the Skipper; and taking heart from the familiar greeting of his host, returned to the dancing apartment with lighter step and more cheerful face.

Blanche took the earliest moment to perform her engagement, hoping by this alacrity to acquit herself of her obligation in a manner least calculated to occasion remark, and soonest to disembarrass herself of her partner's importunity. The dance, on her part, was a reluctant courtesy, and was accordingly so manifested in her demeanour, in spite of her resolution to the contrary. Cocklescraft, however, was too much elated to perceive how ill he stood in the maiden's grace. Scant encouragement will suffice to feed the hopes of a lover; still more scant in a lover of such a temperament as that of the heady seaman. His vanity was quick to interpret favourably every word of civility that fell from Blanche's lips; and the little that escaped her during the dance seemed anew to brighten his hopes and inspire the zeal of his pursuit.

When the engagement was accomplished the maiden quickly escaped from her distasteful suitor, by retiring from the hall and mingling with other companions.

The guests were now summoned to supper. In a wing of the dwelling house the tables were loaded

with dainty cheer, more to be remarked for its capacity to please the palate, than for the enticements which modern epicurism has invented to gratify the eye. An orderly division of matrons in damask and brocade, escorted by quaint cavaliers in periwigs, moved forward at a measured pace to make the first onslaught. These were followed by active bevies of youthful revellers who rushed pell-mell to the scene of assault.

In the housekeeper's apartment which looked into the supper-room, sundry women, intent upon supplying the tables, might have been seen ministering their office with scarcely less clamour than that which echoed from the consumers of the feast. Here, in a post of usurped control over the domestics, busy in rinsing glasses, cleansing platters, adjusting pasties, and despatching comfits, was the merry landlady of the Crow and Archer whose saucy, laughing, and not unhandsome face, grew lustrous with the delight afforded by her occupation. Full as she was of the appropriate business of her station, she still had time to watch the banquet and make her comments upon the incidents which transpired there.

"Ho, Bridget Coldcale! Bridget, this way look you!" she exclaimed, as with napkin in hand, and eye glistening with delight, she beckoned to the thin and busy housekeeper. "If you would live and laugh, pray come this way and take a peep at the table. Who should we have here, as pert and proud as if she was the lady of my Lord, but our gossip, Dolly Cadger? Think of it, —the dame herself, in her own true flesh and blood amongst all these gentlefolk. Marry! Master Anthony

Warden was in straits to choose comers when he went to the mercer's shop to find them. What a precious figure the sea-tortoise makes with her yellow camblet, blue sarsnet, and green satin! And that lace pinner stuck upon her head, with great lappets flaunting down like hound's ears! I cannot but laugh my sides into a stitch—it is such a dainty tire for a mercer's wife. It all comes, you may swear, bran new out of the mercer's pack—for the poor man had never the soul to deny her; there shall be a twelve month's bragging on the top of this. Good lack! yonder is Dauntrees, like an humble bee, beside the Viewer's sister! The old pot-guzzler is never a man to flinch from his trencher. Master Ginger, I know the measure of thy stomach of old! I have warmed thy insides for thee!"

"For the blessing of charity and the love of good works, Dame Dorothy, some drink!" cried Willy, the fiddler, who had just stolen from his post and elbowed his way into the housekeeper's room. "Some drink, beautiful mistress! my throat is as dry as a midsummer chimney; swallows are building nests in it: my lips are dusty from long drought, and my elbow is not able to wag for want of oil. Quick, good dame, or I shall crisp! Ha, the piper's benison upon thy head! that is smooth and to the purpose," he exclaimed, after tossing off a glass which the dame presented him. "Now, worthy hostess, a bone to gnaw, for I am fearfully empty and like to cave in! speed thee, dame: the dancers will be calling before I am filled."

"So,—Willy, set you down and comfort your sto-

mach at your leisure; there will be no haste to leave the supper-table this half hour," replied the landlady, as she laid a plate before the fiddler, furnished with good store of pasty; "take your time and make a belly full of it, child—thou hast earned thy provender. I warrant you, Willy, you never had a merrier pair of legs to 'Hunt the Squirrel,' than our old Captain gave thee to night."

"Haw, haw!" shouted Willy; "Captain Dauntrees is a king of Captains, dame. Troth, he hath put a new spring in Master Warden's old floor. I would have given a piece of eight out of my own pocket, Mistress Dorothy—that is if I had so much—to have seen thee on the plank to-night footing it to 'Hunt the Squirrel' with the Captain, or to 'Moll Pately,' or some such other merry frisk as I could have made for you: it would have been as good as a month's schooling to some of our gentlefolks."

"Me on the floor, indeed!" ejaculated the dame, with an affected laugh. "Faith, I might be there as well as some that crow under a hood, and the ball suffer no shame neither. But Master Warden doth not drop his favour so low as a vintner's wife; he must needs stop short with the mercer. Willy, didst think before, that the publican was of less worship than the pedler? Hath Dame Cadger better reason to hold up her head than Dame Weasel? Speak the truth, man, honestly."

"Master Perry Cadger hath done with peddling more than a year past," replied Willy; "he is now a 'stablished mercer, with freehold in the town and trade in the common: and they do say, Mistress Doro-

thy, that he makes money over-hand; marry, he will be worshipful anon; money makes worship, dame, all the world over."

"May be it doth; but I would fain know, hath not Garret Weasel as goodly a freehold in the town, as old a trade in the common, and as full a pouch as Perry Cadger? better, older, and fuller, on my word! Now, where is that same mortal, my husband?" inquired the dame, looking around her; "as I live by food, there he is at the chimney-cheek, fast asleep in the midst of all this uproar! The noddipeake is of too dull a spirit for such a place as this. Wake him up, Willy! Garret, man!" she screamed, in a tone which instantly brought him to his feet; "if thou'rt weary, put Bogle in the cart and get thee home to bed; Matty will bring the cart back and wait for me."

"I sleepy!" returned the husband, in a husky voice, and with a bewildered drowsy eye which he endeavoured to light up with a laugh; "good woman, if you wait here until I grow sleepy, you will be a weary loiterer,—that's all I have to say. Sleepy, dame! If a man but wink his eye in the light, you would swear to a snore. Adsheartlikens! I have been in many a rouse, wife, as you well know; day-dawn is my twelve of the clock; chanticleer hath crowed himself hoarse many a time before he could get me to bed. I'll see thee out."

"Oh, chops, chops! here's an honest night's work for you!" drawled out Wise Watkin, who had, ever since dark, occupied a station at a window as a spec-

tator of the dancing, and now had pryingly thrust his head into the housekeeper's apartment; "here be eatables and drinkables, wet and dry, to set any stomach a laughing! Why how now, Willy!" he ejaculated, with a chuckle, as he discovered the fiddler regaling himself in the room, and advanced towards him with the skulking step of a dog that is doubtful of his reception; "you know where the fat and the sweet are, I warrant you. Oh, Master Willy, you are a wise fiddler! their worships do well to make much of you. Have you never a crust for Watkin?"

"Out, you dotterel!" shouted Mistress Coldcale, in a key that thrilled through the frame of the simpleton, and turned him precipitately towards the door. "Hav'nt we idlers enough in our way without you? Here, take this and begone amongst thy cronies," she continued, as relenting she gave the witless intruder a plate of provisions. "And as for you, Willy, the young folks are gathering again in the hall, there will be a message for you presently."

"I stay for no message," replied the crowder, as he rose and shook the crumbs from him, and, with jaws still occupied, withdrew from the apartment, followed by the admiring Watkin.

Upon the lawn in front of the house, Albert Verheyden had erected a bower, which sheltered a rustic altar dedicated to St. Therese, over which the name of Blanche had been wrought in large letters, formed by a number of suspended lamps, which threw a softened light for a considerable space around. Hither, after supper, Mr. Warden, with a small party

of his guests, had strolled, in the interval before the sports of the evening were resumed. Cocklescraft had watched the opportunity, and now, somewhat elated with wine as well as buoyed up with hope, had tracked the Collector's footsteps until he found him separated some little space from his company.

"Well met, Master Warden!" was the Skipper's accost, so familiarly whispered in the ear of his host as to produce a slight movement of surprise. "Well met, Caballero! I have a word for thy private ear; this way, if you please. It is somewhat cool, so I will to my purpose roundly, in seaman's fashion."

"Speak what thou wilt, but quickly, Master Cocklescraft, and in plain phrase: I shall like it the better."

"Master Warden, then, without mincing the matter, I would have your leave to woo our beautiful maiden, your daughter."

"Who,—what,—how?" interrupted the Collector, in a voice that spoke his astonishment.

"Your daughter, Mistress Blanche; ay, and have your good word to the suit: I love her like a true son of the sea—heartily, and in that sort would woo her."

"What is it you ask?" again spoke the host with increased surprise.

"I have gear enough, Master Warden; no man may turn his heel on me for lack of gold."

"How now, sirrah!" interrupted the Collector, as in this brief space the storm had gathered to the bursting point: "You would woo my daughter?—woo her?—my Blanche? Richard Cocklescraft, hast lost thy wits—turned fool, idiot; or is thy brain

fevered with drink? You make suit to my daughter! You win and wear a damsel of her nurture! Hear me. Thy craft is a good craft—I do not deny it; an honest calling, when lawfully followed! a brave calling! but thou sail'st on a false reckoning when thou hopest to find favour with my girl Blanche. Thy rough sea-jacket and thy sharking license on the salt sea mates not with daughter of mine:—the rose leaf and the sea-nettle! You venture too largely on your welcome, sirrah!" he said, as his anger began to show itself in his quickened speech, above his effort to restrain it. "Master Skipper, there is insolence in this. Hark you, sir! if you would not have me disown your acquaintance and forbid you my house, you will never speak again of my daughter."

With this brief rebuke of the Skipper's aspirations the host retreated hastily, and much out of humour, into the house, leaving his guest in a state of bewilderment at the sudden and unexpected issue of the interview. For a moment the seaman stood fixed on the spot, his lips compressed, his hands clenched, and his eye directed to the retiring figure of the Collector: at length, beginning to find breath and motion, he muttered, "So, it has come to this! he has been playing the hypocrite! It was but a holiday welcome, after all! I shall note it for future remembrance. A sea-nettle! By Saint Anthony he shall find me one! And that sharking license he spoke of: he shall taste its flavour. This girl hath been trained in her dislikes. Oh, it is his sport to see me foiled! I am brought here express to the ball by his persuasion,—nay, command; I am caressed with courtesies,

and even challenged to romps with the maiden by his own lips. Who so free in his admission here as I? —Richard Cocklescraft, forsooth! One would have thought we had been fellow thieves in our time; there was such cronying in his phrase: and then, at last, when frankly I tell him my purpose, I am to be huffed and hectored off the ground with bullying speeches! He must bounce me as if I were a cowardly boy. Oh, wind and wave and broad-sea sky! it was not in your nursing I learned the patience to bear this wrong. Thou'rt not too old yet, Anthony Warden, to be taught the hazard of rousing a Bloody Brother! And as for thee, gay maiden, dream on of thy bookish ballad-singer, Master Albert! I have a reckoning to settle with him. It will be a dainty exploit to send him, feet foremost, into the Chapel for a blessing. Luckily, Sir Secretary, you owe me the worth of an unsatisfied grudge! Softly—Master Verheyden himself! we meet at a fortunate hour."

The soliloquy of the Skipper was interrupted by the approach of the Secretary, who entered alone into the bower and paused a moment before the little altar. A light tap on the shoulder made Albert aware of the presence of Cocklescraft, and turning round to confront the person who gave it, he was immediately greeted with the accost, "I have a word for your ear, sir;—if you be a man you will follow me out of this broad light. What I have to say is better told where no one may observe us; follow me, sir."

"You are somewhat too peremptory," replied the Secretary, as he stepped after the Skipper toward the cliff: "I follow, though I think more courtesy would

befit your station. I have once before marked and reproved your rudeness."

"I have no courtesies to waste on thee," said Cocklescraft, sharply; "my business is with thy manhood. You have the maiden to thank that I did not bring you to instant account for that insolent reproof you speak of. I come to deal with you upon it now. Art thou a man? Dar'st thou meet me to-morrow, at noon, at Cornwaleys's Cross?"

"I dare meet you and any or all who have right to claim it of me," replied Albert, promptly, "in the way of honourable quarrel, if such be the meaning of your challenge. And although I am ignorant of your degree, and may question your right to defy me to equal contest, yet honoured as you have been under this roof, I shall rest content with that as sufficient pledge of your claim to my attention. You shall find me, sir, punctual to your summons."

"I scorn the shallow claim," returned the Skipper, "to such honour as they who inhabit here may confer. The master of the Olive Branch need not vail his top to a clerkish spinner of syllables, even though the minion's writing-stool be found in my Lord's own ante-chamber. I shall see you to-morrow at noon, at the Cross."

"To-morrow at noon," replied the Secretary, "you shall not complain of my absence, sir."

"It is well! So good night, Master Secretary!" rejoined the Skipper, scornfully, as he bowed to his antagonist and set forth to seek his boat which lay in waiting beneath the bank.

The Secretary turned towards the dwelling, some-

what disturbed by the novel situation into which he had been so unexpectedly thrown, but resolved to conceal the disquiet of his mind and preserve the same outward composure which had marked his deportment during the previous portion of the evening.

"Who lurks there?" he demanded in a stern voice, as he perceived the figure of a man stealing off from his path immediately in the vicinity of the spot where the interview with Cocklescraft had terminated, "Who is it?" he added, checking himself and speaking in a gentler tone, "that plays hide and seek here on the lawn?"

"Nobody," returned a voice from the shelter of the shrubbery, "nobody but me, honourable Master Verheyden: me, Watkin," continued the half-witted lad, as he came visibly into the presence of the Secretary. "Hav'nt we had a famous junketing? Oh, what I have eaten and drunk this blessed night! and what dancing, Master Verheyden! was there ever such fiddling? Willy is a treasure to the quality, I warrant you. Where have you such another?"

"You should be looking on at the dancing," said Albert, anxious to ascertain from the lad if he had heard any thing of what had just passed between himself and Cocklescraft. "How comes it, Watkin, that you are away from your post?"

"Oh, bless you, Master Verheyden, I have more on my hands than you would guess in a week's striving. Now, what should Mistress Coldcale say to me when I had gobbled up my supper, but, Watkin, take this trencher and this pot down to the bank side, and there feed the seamen of Master Cocklescraft's boat,

which you shall find at the landing below the garden. And so, truly, there I found the hungry tarpaulins: and they did eat, Master Albert, like fishes, and drink like wolves. It is Mistress Blanche's birth-day, says I, so we will have no hungry bellies here, comrades. And they laughed, and I came up the bank as I went, running almost out of breath to see fiddler Willy strike up again. And that's the way I fell pop upon you, Master Secretary."

"It was a lucky speed, Watkin; now get thee gone!" said Albert, as he slowly bent his steps towards the hall and mingled again in the bustle of the scene.

As midnight drew near the elder guests had all retired; and at last even the most buoyant began to yield to that weariness of limb, by which nature has set her limit to the endurance of social pleasure, no less peremptorily to those in the prime of youth than to such as wane in their days of decline.

CHAPTER II.

These businesses of fighting
Should be despatched as doctors do prescribe
Physical pills, not to be chew'd but swallowed:
Time spent in the considering deads the appetite.

SHIRLEY.

EARLY in the morning after the ball, Willy of the Flats, who had spent the night amongst the servants at the Rose Croft, strayed forth from his truckle bed and betook himself to the margin of St. Inigoe's creek, where he sat down to look abroad over the waters at the rising sun, and to profit by the breeze as it cooled his brow, still aching with the effects of the late revel. He had not been long in this position before Wise Watkin, fresh from a truss of hay in the barn, espied him, and now hastened to take a seat at his side.

"Well, lad of the clear head and mother wit, what has brought you to the water side so early?" was Willy's question, as the obsequious Watkin came into the presence of his patron.

"As I lay in the barn, Willy," replied Watkin, with a world of gravity in his looks; "I heard first

a hem, mark you, and then a cough;—and says I, that's Willy of the Flats, by the sound of his throat. And so, I gets up and looks out through the cranny, and, sure enough, there was you walking, with your hands in your pockets and your hat set a one side like a gentleman:—and then, says I, if Willy's stirring now so early, honest folks ought to be abroad too. And with that, out I walked, he, he, he!—and here I am sitting beside you, like another gentleman."

"Then, Wise Watkin, since we are so sociable, tell me what you think of our ball last night?"

"Oh, grand!—grand, grand, Master Willy! Oh, you have tickled Toby in the ribs, Master Willy!—you have done it, as it was never done before. People will talk of Willy of the Flats after this. Mistress Blanche will talk of you,—Master Albert will talk of you. I shouldn't wonder if his Lordship should send you a purse of gold. I'm sure it's no more than folks look to see done."

"And Mistress Coldcale did not stint to give you plenty to stay your stomach, Watkin?"

"Plenty, troth, and to spare, Willy! Mistress Coldcale is a mother of open hands. I could live under Mistress Coldcale all my born days and never grudge what I did for her."

"Mistress Bridget will give us our breakfasts, this morning," said the fiddler, patting the simpleton on the head; "and then, Watkin, we must away. It will not be well taken if we tarry too long after the feast."

"There is more sport on hand to-day, Willy. We

must not go till that be over. There is to be a set-to at Cornwaleys's Cross to-day."

"A set-to?"

"I know all about it, Master Willy. I heard them appoint it."

"Heard who? What dost thou mean, Wise Watkin?"

"Listen, Willy;—it was as I shall tell you. When I carried fodder to the boat last night, as Mistress Bridget ordered—I call a full trencher of meat fodder, Master Willy—I comes back by the way of the stile over the hedge, when what should I see but two gentlefolks in a discourse, and what should I hear but 'I'll meet you, and you will meet me to-morrow morning at noon, at Cornwaleys's Cross.' Oh, it is a made-up business, Willy."

"Who art thou speaking of, thou slippery-witted fool?" demanded the fiddler, sharply.

"Nay, if you tax me so keenly, Willy,—I will not answer. I could have told you what Master Albert said to me afterwards, when Master Cocklescraft went over the bank and into his boat—but I will not,—for thy sharpness."

"Now, Watkin, wise lad, are you not a fool to take in dudgeon the freedom of an old friend? Come, there's a hand—and in token of good will you will tell me what all this story comes to."

"As true as I am an honest man, Willy, I heard it. Master Cocklescraft comes first to the hedge and Master Verheyden following. Oh ho, says I, here's a state matter, and so I doused my head under the hedge. Then Master Cocklescraft says to our

honourable Secretary, you will meet me if you are a man. And the Secretary says, I am a man of as good gristle as you, and I will meet you at the Cross —Cornwaleys's Cross.—When? says Cocklescraft—at noon to-morrow morning, says the Secretary. I'll go and get ready, says Cocklescraft;—and with that, off he marches. There will be a pretty wrestling match for you, Master Willy! And I should n't wonder if they should get to a pitch of the bar before they part: Master Cocklescraft has a great arm for heaving a bar. You and me, Willy, will be there to see it. Oh—I made up my mind last night that the first thing I did this day was to tell you, that you might see it. I know you love a wrestle, Willy."

"Truly, this is a matter to be looked to, Watkin, —I will cast it over in my mind and tell you whether we shall go to it or not."

"Well," continued Watkin, "the Secretary turns himself about to go to the house, and suddenly, out of the back of his head, he spies me; and so takes me to an account to say what I lurked there for.—Oh, bless you, Willy,—I did n't tell him!—I am no fool;—if I had let on about the wrestling I should never have had the luck to get sight of it—these gentlefolks will not be a country gaze—I know them:—the Secretary was not going to tickle Toby in my ribs. All he got out of me was that I had borne a trencher of fodder to the boatmen—and so he went his way, and I went mine."

"Thou art a wise boy, Watkin, and all that I would have thee do now is keep thy counsel. Say

not a word of this to living man. We will have it clean to ourselves."

"My lips shall be as fast as a padlock, Master Willy. Mortal man shall not screw it out of me."

The fiddler having extracted from Wise Watkin the particulars detailed in this dialogue, was shrewd enough to interpret them according to the real nature of the incident to which they referred. He knew that the lad was scrupulous in telling the truth, as well as he comprehended it, in all matters that came under his observation, and Willy therefore had no reserve in the assurance that there was on foot a quarrel between the Secretary and the Skipper, which was to be adjusted at Cornwaleys's Cross, on that day. The nature of the quarrel he could not conjecture, although he was not ignorant that the individuals concerned in it, both held a relation to the maiden of the Rose Croft which might very naturally breed ill will between them. It was indeed a part of Willy's vocation to note such matters in the range of his wanderings,—and he had not been so idle since the arrival of Cocklescraft in the port, and especially during the festival of the previous night, as to shut his eye or ear to the deportment of the two young men in the presence of the damsel.

Upon revolving over the circumstances of Watkin's disclosure, and maturely perpending, after his own manner, the pressure of the case, he came to the wise conclusion that the best thing he could do was to communicate the whole story to Blanche and leave the matter in her hands. Accordingly, as soon

as the maiden had taken her morning repast, he gained access to her in the little bower of St. Therese, and there made her a confidential relation of the particulars, not only as he received them from Wise Watkin, but with such commentary as occurred to him to belong to the probable state of the facts. Blanche received the communication with the deepest emotion. Whilst the fiddler told his story, her cheek grew pale—tears started in her eyes, her lip quivered, her limbs, at last, became rigid, and she fainted away. Before Willy, however, could quit her side to call in others to her relief, she revived, and with a tottering step made her way into the house. A brief pause enabled her to summon up her strength and more composedly to address herself to the emergency in her view. The thought that Albert Verheyden was placed in circumstances of peril gave her as much alarm as if instant danger threatened herself; and now, for the first time in her life, she became conscious, how deep was the stake she had in his welfare. Then, too, she felt no other conviction but that his jeopardy was the direct consequence of his zeal in her service;—that the Skipper had brought him into the quarrel on some ground having relation to her. Cocklescraft, besides, in her estimate of him, was a reckless and ruthless man, of fierce passions and violent hand, and she trembled to think that the gentle Master Albert should be confronted with such an adversary. "But Master Albert is brave," she said, "and will not brook that rough Skipper's rudeness; he chides his coarse behaviour,—as well such churl deserves to be chidden.

Albert does not count the hazard of his quarrel, but leaves that for timid maidens to do. Oh, blessed virgin Therese!" she exclaimed as she cast her eye upon the picture of the saint which was suspended on the wall of her chamber; "take good Master Albert into thy care, and bear him harmless through this peril. His quarrel cannot but be just, and the saints will guard him as they ever guard the right."

Having come to this conclusion and taken heart at the thought, she straightway resolved, as every maiden in similar circumstances would resolve, notwithstanding the guardianship of the saints which she had invoked, to fall upon some scheme, if possible, to prevent the duel. With this view she called sister Alice into a conference, and their joint conclusion was to make known the matter to Mr. Warden. But the Collector had already gone abroad, and time pressed, leaving but a few hours for action. Their next resource was father Pierre; and instantly upon the thought of him, Alice sat down and wrote the reverend priest a letter, narrating the whole story and imploring his instant intercession by such offices as he might believe most effectual to frustrate the purpose of the belligerents. When the letter was ready, Willy of the Flats was summoned into the presence of the ladies, and was strictly charged to hie him with all haste to father Pierre's dwelling, and to put the missive into his own hands, as a matter of the utmost importance requiring his immediate attention. To this charge was added a dozen alternatives adapted to every contingency dependant upon father Pierre's possible absence or inability to act. Thus

commissioned Willy, followed by his shadow, Wise Watkin, set forth for the town, at a rate which kept the good-natured attendant in a half trot.

Whilst these things were going on at the Rose Croft, the Secretary was not idle in his preparation for the issues of the day. Albert Verheyden was, as I have already hinted, of an ardent and impulsive temper, moved by a keen relish for enterprise, and directed by a lofty tone of honour. His bookish and half-clerical character, the result of the discipline of his school and his early destination for the church, gave him a gentle and almost diffident motion, which strongly contrasted with the warmth of his feelings, and the eagerness of his spirit. It was, therefore, with a positive sense of pleasure, that he had seized the opportunity to appear as the champion of Blanche Warden in the first hostile passage which took place between the Skipper and himself—a pleasure resulting not less from the alacrity with which he ever rendered service to the maiden, but also from the instinct of a romantic nature that delighted in the thought of matching its manhood with a formidable adversary. He had never, however, as yet contemplated the reality of an appeal to arms; and although in his course of accomplishment, as was the fashion of that day, after he had renounced his purpose of serving the church, he had practised the use of his weapon, and even attained to considerable skill in it, yet he had not brought himself to look upon it as other than a light exercise which, like dancing, was intended to fit him for the graceful service of the station he was to fill. His ecclesiastical training was

not yet so forgotten as to leave him at perfect ease with himself in his present straits. It was not, therefore, with apprehension, so much as with diffidence, that he found himself now engaged in the appointment of the duel. He awoke at the dawn of day, full of the thoughts connected with the affair in hand; and in casting about for a fit counsellor and friend in this emergency, he fixed his attention upon Captain Dauntrees, as a man who would not only do him a friendly turn, but as one well qualified to advise him how to comport himself through the ordeal of the meeting. Having resolved instantly to see the Captain, he arose, and before the domestics were stirring about the Proprietary mansion, threw his cloak over his shoulder, concealing under its folds his rapier, and betook himself to the Fort. Being admitted by the sentry, he hastened to the little parlour of the Captain's quarters, where he arrived whilst that worthy was still snoring in his bed. The master of the garrison, however, was soon awakened from his slumber, by a servant with the announcement of his visiter, and immediately afterwards threw open his chamber door, which communicated with the parlour, and disclosed to the Secretary his burly figure half attired, whilst he was yet busy in throwing on his garments.

"Good morrow, Master Verheyden!" he said with a yawn, scarcely half awake; "I take shame to myself for a laggard to have so honourable a guest my teacher of good habits in early rising. But the Collector's wine was drugged last night, and had a virtue of sleepiness in it which hath touched me in

the brain pan. It is not more than once in a man's lifetime, Master Secretary, that so choice a maiden as our Mistress Blanche comes to so rich an age as eighteen. You may search the two hemispheres for another like her, and still make a bootless errand of it. It was an occasion for a cup, and a most reasonable excuse for a late nap in the morning."

"The sun is just peering above the water, Captain," replied the Secretary; "and he who sleeps no later than sunrise, even without the excuse of a night revel, may scarcely be chid for laziness. I have broken in thus early upon you, that I might speak with you on a matter of moment to myself. I want your counsel and friendship in an affair touching mine honour, Captain Dauntrees."

"Ah, is it there the wind sits? Tarry, Master Verheyden, but a moment, whilst I get my serving man to truss my points, I shall be with you anon. An affair of the sword, truly! It is well to be early in the consideration of such matters. Matchcote, hark ye! come hither,—quickly," he shouted from his door to his valet; "come, gather these points and set me abroad. There, there,—now leave us, and busy thyself about breakfast, Matchcote,—we shall have a relish for the best in the larder. Away, good fellow!" As soon as the servant, in obedience to this order, had left the apartment, the Captain inquired—"Who have we opposed to us, Master Verheyden? Do we take him with long sword, tuck or rapier? Where do we meet? But first begin the story at the beginning."

"That I propose to do, Captain," said the Secre-

tary, smiling. "This Cocklescraft, the master of the Olive Branch, hath chosen to conceive himself offended by a rebuke I found it necessary to give him for some unseasonable importunity of our maiden of the Rose Croft. It is almost a sennight past, and he must needs tax me with it, last night and challenge me to a trial of manhood. His challenge grows out of some sudden moodiness engendered by somewhat that vexed him at the dance. Now, though I hold the Skipper as scarce privileged to exact of me the redress of his weapon, being of a base condition so far as he is known in the province—yet, Captain, I did not choose to be defied by him, and, therefore, without parley or asking time for deliberation, accepted his challenge, wherein it was appointed to hold the meeting this day at noon at Cornwaleys's Cross. I would entreat your friendship to stand by me in this appointment; and, as I am all unversed in the usage of the duel, your better experience may instruct me."

"It was well done on your part, Master Albert,—exceeding well done," replied the Captain. "I applaud you for a gentleman of prompt spirit, and careful consideration of his honour. This same Master Cocklescraft needs such discipline as you may teach him. He tosses the feather of his bonnet somewhat more jauntily over his shoulder, than he has warrant to do; and he hath a trick of turning the buckle of his belt behind more frequently than peaceable, well-disposed persons may choose to bear. I have noted him with greater strictness than others in the port, and have, from the first, written him down a dog of

rough breed, notwithstanding his velvet jerkin and golden tassels. I have seen too many whelps of that litter, Master Verheyden, not to know them when I meet them. You did well to receive his challenge,—although one would hardly have thought you had learned as much in the seminary at Antwerp. At noon is it? We have some hours before us, Master Secretary, and may employ the time in practice for the encounter. I will give you some cautions that shall stand you in stead to-day."

CHAPTER III.

——— He that fights a duel,
Like a blind man that falls, but cares to keep
His staff, provides with art to save his honour,
But trusts his soul to chance: 'tis an ill fashion.

SHIRLEY.

WHILST the Secretary was undergoing the Captain's preparatory training in the Fort, the Skipper was no less busy in making provision for the meeting. Having secured the services of a second, he betook himself on board of his vessel, which he caused to be loosed from her mooring and then dropped down the river opposite the creek of St. Inigoe's, where he anchored—his purpose being to take a position convenient to the spot chosen for the encounter, and to which he might proceed without suspicion from the townspeople.

Cornwaleys's Cross was situated near the most inland extremity of a deep and narrow inlet, known by the name of St: Luke's creek—a branch of St. Inigoe's—on a piece of meadow, surrounded by woods, immediately at the foot of a range of hills, not more than four miles, by land, from the Port of St. Mary's, and about half that distance by water

from the anchorage of the Olive Branch. This spot was traditionally notorious to the inhabitants of the town, as the scene of a melancholy event that had happened nearly fifty years anterior to the date of this story, in which a gentleman of repute in the early history of the province, Captain Cornwaleys, had the misfortune, on a hunting excursion, accidentally and with fatal effect to lodge the contents of his carbine in the bosom of his friend. The bitterness of this unhappy gentleman's grief, unallayed by active and meritorious service in the early wars of the colony, induced him, in the decline of his life, to erect a hermitage on the spot, whither he retired, in obedience to a penitential vow, and dedicated the remnant of his days to austere self-denial and religious devotion. A cross of locust, now swayed from its perpendicular by age, still reared its shattered frame above the ruins of the ancient hermitage, of which there yet remained a few mouldering logs, mingled with the fragments of the crushed roof, and the hearth-stone showing the scorches of long-quenched fires in the light of which the soldier-hermit had undergone his painful vigils of prayer. A certain superstitious notoriety was thus conferred upon the place, and by some strange association peculiar to the habits of those times, in which the sword and cross still held a mystical relation in the popular belief, it had grown to be the customary appointed trysting ground for those personal combats which constituted, at that era, almost a lawful and approved ordinance of society.

In the vicinity of this spot, about half an hour be-

fore noon, occasional glimpses through the foliage might have been had of Captain Dauntrees and Albert Verheyden, followed by Matchcote, the Captain's man,—all mounted,—as they descended the hill in the rear of St. Luke's, by a winding, gravelly road, partially overgrown with bay-tree, alder, and laurel. The murmur of cheerful conversation, and now and then an outflash of audible mirth in the voice of the Captain, for some moments before they arrived at their halting point, would have puzzled a casual hearer to guess the nature of their errand: and when they reached the level ground and finally reined up their horses, hard by the old, wind-shaken cross, Dauntrees was still engaged in narrating to the Secretary some story of pleasant interest, which had evidently, for the time, drawn off at least the narrator's thoughts from the main purpose of the day.

"By our patron! Master Verheyden," said the commander of the Fort, as he carefully clambered down from his saddle and drew forth his watch, "we have here reached our ground before I was aware of it: a cheerful companion has a marvellous faculty in abridging a long road.—The adventures of this Claude de la Chastre would wear out a winter night in the telling, and never a drowsy ear in the company. I purpose, on a fit occasion, Master Albert, to rehearse to you more of that worthy soldier's exploits. He served under six kings, and fought fifteen duels,—the last at three score and ten. I have seen his chapel and tomb with my own eyes at Bourges, and his true effigies cut in stone."

"I have been but a listener, Captain," said the

Secretary with a smile, "and would willingly hear more of that valiant gentleman, when we have brought our own adventures to an end. Methinks now, we may find other occupation in the matter we have in hand."

"Why as to that, Master Verheyden," replied the Captain, "as we have very diligently perpended all matters relating to this meeting, before we quitted the Fort, and have now nothing left to do but to wait for the accolade, the less thought we give it the better. We should go to this pinking and scratching as a mumbling old priest goes to mass,—even as a thing of custom, wherein there is but little premeditation: —and yet, by my gossip, not exactly as a priest goes to mass, for he goes hungry and dry: I would by no means have it so. Here, Matchcote, that flask from thy wallet? I have ever found that when an affair of business or sport be on hand, it is good grace to begin it, first by devoutly drawing thy sleeve, like a Dutch toper, across thy mouth, and then to take such reasonable and opportune refreshment as shall give a fillip to the spirit without clouding the brain. And so, by way of example, as your senior, Master Verheyden," he added, taking the bottle from the servant's hand and applying it to his mouth, "here I drink—Good fortune to our venture!

'True eye and steady hand,
Home thrust and keen brand,'

as the rhyme has it. You will drink, master?"

"I pray you, excuse me, Captain," replied Albert; "my head will not stand so early a freedom, and, to

say the truth, I have no relish for food or drink until this affair be done. I scarce ate this morning."

"Over-anxiousness, Master Secretary! too eager for thy first entry upon the field of Mars!—ha, ha!—the token of a green soldier, a callow martialist; but it is natural, and will wear off when thou hast fought half-a-dozen of these bouts. I went through it all myself. In my 'prenticeship I could neither sleep nor eat—faith! I will not say drink—at the contemplation of a pitched field, but was ever taken up with the thought of making ready. There was always some tag in my bandalier to be looked to—some strap awry—some furbishing of musquetoon, pike or sword to be cared for:—works of supererogation! as the church has it. But it is pleasant to behold how use in the wars corrects a qualmish appetite, and contents one with his accommodation:—it teaches the stomach the custom of instant service. So keep thyself cool, Master Verheyden,—it is a cardinal point of discretion. And, I beseech you, be not fanciful in your conceit of skill with your weapon; for though you play well, you have a swordsman to deal with. I have seen some whipsters who were over-fantastic and dainty in their love of the quarrel; and it was as much as their tutors could do to bring them to that modesty of opinion which should put them on the necessary cautions of fence. Such hawklings get their lesson in good time: this world has store of rubbers for a vaulting temper. I pray, you, therefore, Master Secretary, bear yourself humbly, as it were. Remember, this is thy first quarrel."

"You shall find me tractable in all things, worthy Captain, to your better experience."

"I have seen," continued Dauntrees, "almost as many of these dudgeon-prickings as the renowned Claude de la Chastre himself; and have found, in nine chances out of ten, your cool and cheery gentleman to get the odds of your choleric hot-blood. I had a comrade in Flanders who was a master in this sort—and, by the bell and candle! a priest. A most comical churchman, truly! His name was Roger O'Brien, an Irish Jesuit, and most notable for many perfections both of the book and the sword. From a liking to his old trade—for he served with Prince Rupert before he took up the cassock—he must needs, for a fancy, put on the red coat again, and buckle his cheese-toaster to his thigh, and, in this disguise, throw himself abroad amongst the lanskennets and swash-bucklers of Flanders. There I met him, and we journeyed together to Paris. Ha, ha, ha! I saw him foil the whole Sorbonne on a great prize question! There was a thesis debated—a quodlibet wrangle concerning some knot in the cobweb of theology—where the whole world was challenged to the dispute. Thereupon, my Irish friend and myself—both in our livery—went swaggering in to see and hear how these Frenchmen chopped their logic. The thesis was debated in Latin; when presently, to the amazement of all—myself no less than others—up rises my priest to say somewhat to the point. Well, a Spanish cavalier there present, thinking my comrade could be no other than a man of the wars in his cups, rudely pulls him by the skirt to take his seat: but he, nowise

heeding this interruption, pressed on in his discourse, and poured out such a flood of choice Latin, most select in phrase and apt in argument, that the amazement of the company was greatly increased, and our priestly martialist won the whole glory of the day. The Sorbonne was mute, and the assembly in an ecstasy of wonder. Whereupon departing, father O'Brien touches the Spanish cavalier upon the shoulder, and whispers in his ear a challenge to meet him, at sunset, in the church-yard of St. Genevieve, which the Spaniard could not choose avoid. I went with my friend to the rendezvous; and on the way, amongst other discourse touching the arrangement of the duel, I shall not forget his commendation of this virtue of coolness, by which I have more than once profited: for he was, Master Verheyden, a most expert swordsman, and singularly versed in the practique of these single combats, and showed it too on that day; for our testy Spaniard, a fellow of pepper and ginger, was whipt through the lungs whilst he was flourishing at a stoccado. Said father O'Brien to me,—a man who plays at this craft of phlebotomy, should carry a light heart and a merry eye before his adversary, and, like a rake-helly royster who makes free of the commodity of a tavern, should give no thought to the reckoning. It was excellent advice, Master Verheyden, and I commend it to your notice now."

"I shall do my best," replied the Secretary; "and if I should chance, Master Dauntrees, to fail in some necessary punctilio, you will pardon it, for my unskilfulness. An acolyte of the Seminary of Antwerp

has but scant opportunity to make himself master of the observances of the duello."

"By my honour as a man, Master Secretary, I have not seen amongst the most practised cavaliers, a gentleman who comes to his appointment with better grace, than this same acolyte of the Seminary of Antwerp."

"You commend beyond my desert, good Captain, though I have reasonable trust in my sword. Whilst my Lord tarried some three months in Brabant, being at Louvain, I had a master there—an Italian, one Signor Sacchari—who taught me to ride the great horse and manage my weapon, both rapier and long-sword. And, to say sooth,—though it should shame me to confess it,—I do not dislike this quarrel with the Skipper. I do not perceive,—and yet I may misjudge the world's opinion,—but I do not perceive how I may be blamed for taking up this quarrel. I tell you truly, Master Dauntrees," added the Secretary, blushing, "and I would beg you say so—to her, Master Dauntrees—if adverse fortune should befall me on this ground to-day—that I would gladly encounter for Mistress Blanche, our maiden of the Rose Croft, a sharper war and more perilous hazard than this single combat with a rude and boisterous seaman; and now, with right good will I seek to do her honour against the body of this unruly Skipper. Say so to her, I pray you, good Captain Dauntrees."

"Tush, man, you heed not my preaching! When thou goest to dying-speeches, it is summing up of the reckoning. A fig's end for the message! thou shalt bear it to the maiden thyself.—Blame thee, Master

Secretary! Who would blame, I would fain know, a brave man who does battle for so peerless a maiden? By my manhood! I think that nothing short of the maiden herself will be fit guerdon for this exploit. He was a wise and a courteous king, as the ballad feigns him, that gave his daughter to the brave knight who overthrew his adversary in combat. Now, I will take on me to say that no king of the ballad ever had more need to be rid of a pestilent suitor to his daughter, than our worshipful friend, old Anthony Warden, has to be free of this sea-dog. Thou shalt fairly win a most fair meed: and here, once more, I do thee honour in a sup, with this pledge—

> May'st thou richly wear
> The meed thou winn'st so fair!

There's verse for it—halting verse, ha, ha! Master Verheyden, but of an honest coinage: it comes from thine and the maiden's well-wisher." And with this flash of merriment, the Captain again plied the flask, and spent some moments laughing at his jest, when he suddenly ceased with the remark, "I hear the stroke of oars—this Master Cocklescraft is at hand. He is punctual, for it is just noon. We shall see him anon."

It was as the Captain said: for at that moment Cocklescraft, attended by two followers, was seen coming up from the margin of St. Luke's, across the meadow, to the place appointed for the combat.

Cocklescraft's bearing was stern; his brow high charged with passion, and a keen resentment flashed from his eye, as he advanced into the presence of

his adversary. A slight salute passed between the combatants, and for some moments each party drew aside.

In the presence of his antagonist Dauntrees' whole deportment was changed. He had heretofore, as we have seen, assumed a cheerful vein of intercourse with his principal, considerately adapted with a view to amuse his mind and give him the necessary assurance which the successful conduct of the enterprise required—a labour, however, which was in no degree rendered necessary by the circumstances of the case, as it was very apparent that the Secretary, although a novice in the practice of the quarrel, was altogether self-possessed and even eager for the issue. The Captain, however, was not slow to perceive that there was still in his carriage that hurried motion and too anxious restlessness which betokened the novelty of the situation in which he found himself, and the earnestness of his desire to acquit himself to the satisfaction of his own feelings. Through all this cheerful colloquy of the Captain, Albert's manner was grave, and scarce responded to his companion's merriment; but now that the moment of action arrived, he grew apparently more light-hearted; whilst, on the other hand, Dauntrees became serious, and addressed himself to the business in hand, like a careful and provident man.

"The Skipper is surly," said Dauntrees, as he stood apart with the Secretary, wiping the sword that was to be used by his friend. "I am glad to see it: it denotes passion. Receive the assault from him; stand on your defence, giving ground slightly to his

advance: then suddenly, when you have whipped him to a rage, as you will surely do, give back the attack hotly; follow it up, as you did this morning in practice with me, and you will hardly fail to find him at disadvantage; then thrust home—for the shorter you make this quarrel the better for your strength."

"I am more at my ease in this play than you think me," replied Albert, smiling; "you shall find it so. Pray let us go to our business."

The Captain, with two rapiers in his hand, advanced to the ground occupied by Cocklescraft and his friends.

"I would be acquainted with thy second, Master Cocklescraft," he said. "Here are our swords: shall we measure?"

"Master Roche Del Carmine," replied the Skipper, as he presented a swarthy Portuguese seaman, the mate of the Olive Branch; "this other companion is but a looker on."

"I would thou had'st matched me," replied Dauntrees, hastily, and with some show of displeasure, "with an antagonist of better degree, Master Skipper, than this mate of thine. He was but a boatswain within the year past. Our quality deserved that you should sort us with gentlemen, at least."

"Gentlemen!" exclaimed the Portuguese, in a passion; "St. Salvadore! are we not gentlemen enough for you. We belong to the Coast—"

"Peace, sirrah!" hastily interrupted Cocklescraft: "Prate not here—leave me to speak! Master Roche Del Carmine is my follower, not my second, further than as your bearing, Master Dauntrees, may render

one needful to me. I came hither to make my own battle."

"I came to this field," replied Dauntrees, "prepared with my sword to make good the quarrel of my friend against any you might match me with. So, second or follower, bully or bravo at your heels, Master Cocklescraft, I will fight with this Master Roche."

"That is but a boy's play, and I will none of it, Captain Dauntrees," said Cocklescraft, angrily. "This custom of making parties brings the quarrel to an end at the first drawing of blood. I wish no respite upon a scratch; my demand stops not short of a mortal strife."

"My sword, sir!" said Albert Verheyden, hastily striding up to the Captain and seizing his sword. "This is my quarrel alone; Captain Dauntrees you strike no blow in it. Upon your guard, sir!" he added, whilst his eye flashed fire, and his whole figure was lighted up with the animation of his anger. "To your guard! I will have no parley!"

"Are you bereft!" exclaimed Dauntrees, interposing with his sword between the parties, and looking the Secretary steadfastly in the face. "Back, Master Verheyden, this quarrel must proceed orderly."

Then conducting his principal some paces off, the other yielding to his guidance, he again cautioned him against losing his self-command by such bursts of passion. The Secretary promised obedience and begged him to proceed.

"Go to it, in cuerpo—strip to thy shirt, Master

Albert!" said the Captain. When the Secretary had, in obedience to this order, thrown aside his cloak and doublet, and come to the spot designated by his second as his position in the fight, Dauntrees once more approached the opposite party, went through the formal ceremony of measuring swords, and then returned and placed the weapon in Albert's hand, at the same time drawing his own and planting himself within a few paces of his friend.

"We are ready, sir!" he said, bowing to the Skipper's attendant.

Cocklescraft lost no time in taking his ground; Master Roche del Carmine, carefully keeping out of the way of harm from any party.

"The onset was made by the Skipper with an energy that almost amounted to rage, and it was with a most lively interest, not unmingled with pleasure, that Dauntrees watched the eye of Albert Verheyden, and saw it playing with an expression of confidence and self-command whilst, with admirable dexterity, he parried his antagonist's assault.

"Bravo!" exclaimed Dauntrees, more than once during this anxious moment. "To it, Master Verheyden! passado—hotly, master!" he cried aloud, at the same time flourishing his own blade above his head when he saw Albert return the attack with great animation upon his adversary, who was thus compelled to give ground.

This rapid exchange of thrust and parry was suddenly arrested by the sword of the Skipper being struck from his hand. The Secretary had disarmed him, and instead of following up his advantage, ge-

nerously halted and brought the point of his own sword to the ground.

"The fight is done; we hold you, sir, at mercy!" said Dauntrees, promptly interposing, and placing his foot upon the Skipper's rapier. "Master Verheyden has come hither upon your challenge; you will acknowledge that your life is in his hands. You have had your satisfaction, sir."

As the Captain said this he stepped one pace aside, and Cocklescraft at the same instant picked up the rapier from the ground, and madly called out for a renewal of the fight, as with extended arm he presented himself again upon his guard.

"Instead of the favour that has been shown thee in sparing thy worthless life, thou deservest to be cloven to the chine for this dastardly bravado!" exclaimed Dauntrees, as his spirit suddenly kindled into wrath, notwithstanding the advice he had given the Secretary to keep his temper. "Out upon thee for a disgrace to thy calling!" he added, in a tone of angry reproof, as advancing nearer to the Skipper he struck the extended rapier with a dexterous underblow and made it spin in the air above his head; "I could almost find it in my conscience to spit thee upon my sword."

"By the Virgin, I will not see my Captain put upon!" said Roche del Carmine, as he now advanced towards the combatants, though still keeping a respectful space between himself and the Captain, whose skill of fence he had no mind to try.

"Nor I!" exclaimed the other attendant, at the same time drawing his hanger and shouting, "Whoop,

Master Cocklescraft! Perros, a la savanna! For the Brothers of the Coast!—let them have it in the fashion of the Costa Rica!"

"Caitiffs!" vociferated Dauntrees, as he and Albert Verheyden now sprang forward to engage with the attendants——

"Back to your boat, you knaves! is it thus you serve me?" interposed Cocklescraft, thrusting his officious followers aside, and then whispering to the mate, "there is an end of it—begone!"

"By my sword, but here is a crossing of our plot!" exclaimed Dauntrees, on looking towards the range of upland over which the road towards the town lay, and discovering no less a personage than the Proprietary and father Pierre approaching them on horseback; "we have been informed on and tracked. Thanks to our luck! his Lordship may do nothing better than rail against us, as is his wont. He has ever had a quick nose to scent out a duel—ay, and a nimble tongue, Master Verheyden, to reprove one: this is not my first experience of his reprimand. We shall have it without stint presently."

"To the boat, quickly, and put off!" said Cocklescraft, with a sullen angry tone to his companions. "I may find another day to right myself," he muttered, as he gathered up his sword, cloak, and hat, and, with a moody swagger, hurriedly strode towards his boat which lay in a direction opposite to that from which the Proprietary was hastening towards the scene. In a few moments he had embarked, and was seen shooting along the glassy surface of St. Luke's, until he was speedily lost to view by round-

ing one of the turns of the creek. In the mean time Lord Baltimore and the priest arrived on the ground of the combat before the Secretary had yet resumed his doublet.

"Ah, my son, my son!" exclaimed the good father Pierre, as he pricked his steed forward in advance of the Proprietary, and made haste to alight and throw his arms around Albert's neck, kissing his cheeks, whilst the tears flowed down his own; "my son Albert, how could you be so unmindful of poor father Pierre, to give him all this pain? We saw swords flashing in the sun, and heard the clank of steel. Are you hurt, my son? You look pale."

"I am not hurt, father, more than that I am pained to see you here," replied the Secretary, as he affectionately placed his arm across the old man's shoulders; "our quarrel has ended without the shedding of blood."

"Albert Verheyden," said the Proprietary gravely, reining up beside the young man, "I take it much amiss that one of my household should dare to contemn the laws of this province by coming forth to such appointment as I find you concerned in here. I had reason to hope for the setting of good example from him whom I chose for my Secretary; but I find you fostering an evil usage which is worthy no better countenance than such as it hath gained from hot-bloods and rufflers. Fie on thee, Albert! Is it for thee, who hast but lately changed thy square cloister-bonnet for the feathery gewgaw of a page—is it for thee to play at bilbo and buff like a common royster? Have we no shallow-pated coxcomb with the privi-

lege of wearing a sword, who, for lack of other quality to be noted by, hath learned a trick to vapour and strut, and swear filthy oaths, and break God's commandments and men's peace with his bloody broils, but that a scholar and gentleman, nursed in all kindly studies—ay, and who hath been reared, Master Verheyden, within the pale of the altar—must needs turn buckler-man with a rude sea-rover, and quarrel and strike as in an ale-house fray? Oh, it doth grieve me to find you thus!"

"My honoured Lord," replied Albert, not venturing to raise his eyes from the ground, "I do confess my fault, which with forethought and weighing of all consequence, except my Lord's displeasure, I did commit. I was called hither by such defiance as it would not have consisted with my manhood to refuse. I have sought no companionship with the Skipper, nor knew that such man was, till within a week—and even now was prone to slight him off, as one not worthy of my resentment; but, my good Lord, venturing to presume upon my cloistered schooling and my unskilfulness with my sword, he must taunt with a question of my courage, and defy me hither."

"And if a fellow who lives upon the element of his own brawls, must take a conceit to exalt his base condition by having a contest with his betters, shall he compass it by bragging words and bullying questions? Does it mend his manners, or exalt thy deservings to have a pass with him on the green sward? Would it comfort thee to bring away from this field a hand red with his blood? Captain Dauntress, how comes

it to pass that I see you here? Your age should have given you the privilege to be a peace-maker, not the fomenter of a quarrel."

"My Lord," said the Captain, folding his arms across his breast and advancing one foot to give a more sturdy fixedness to his attitude, whilst an expression half comic lurked in his eye, "I am an old ban-dog that has been chidden too often for barking to heed reproof in my old age. Your Lordship hath the credit of a persevering spirit to abolish the duello within the province; I foretell you will even give over before your work is done: it were but lost pains, if I might be so bold as to say so—at least until your Lordship shall find a more mannerly brood of lieges. By the mass! we shall win sainthood for our patience, if, in these saucy times, we may reach such perfection of humility as to brook the insolences of some of your Lordship's hopeful children of the province. The Skipper was rude to our Mistress Blanche, —and the Secretary, like a cavalier, such as becomes your Lordship's household, rebuked him for it; and thereupon grew a considered challenge, which Master Verheyden accepting, as, in my poor judgment, he could not otherwise do, I came hither with him to see fair play. It is well I did—for, to my thinking, this seaman would not have stopped at any measure of treachery. He has a deep hate against the Secretary, and the lesson Master Verheyden has taught him will not much sweeten his humour."

"Thy profession, Captain Dauntrees, gives thee a license which makes it but lost breath to chide thee,"

said the Proprietary calmly, nowise offended with the soldier's familiar and rebellious good nature; "and, to say the truth, there is much rude speech and provoking action to tempt even a more governed man into quarrel; yet I would not have you believe that I take this transgression so lightly. Albert Verheyden, you will incur my deepest displeasure, if, under any pretext or advice, you farther prosecute this feud. Captain Dauntrees, I command you to look to it, and charge you to arrest the first who seeks to revive the quarrel."

"On the faith of my love to your Lordship," replied Albert, "I promise that I will not again offend."

"My dear son," interposed the priest, still holding the Secretary's hand, "my experience has long admonished me, that to preach restraint upon the desires of the young is but struggling up the channel of a torrent: it is hard to teach patience under wrong to those whose blood is hot with the fever of passion. Still, mon enfant, though I may not hope to persuade you—for verily I know the censure of the world leaves to a temper such as thine no choice but obedience to the law of custom—still, my dear son, you will sometimes, perhaps, take old father Pierre's words to heart: he would entreat you to reflect, that although offence may abound, and the fashion of men's opinions may set disgrace upon the refusal to right a contrived wrong; and though the pride of manhood may take pleasure in strife—yea, even though thy conscience shall tell thee of a just cause, and worthy of vindication by the sword—yet the heroism of suffering hath better acceptation with Heaven than all the

heroism of action. Do not forget neither, my dear Master Albert, that thou art linked in this world with others, whose right to thee and to thy affections thou durst not violate but at the hazard of the displeasure of the God who placed thee here and gave thee to thy kind. How should father Pierre have borne the bereavement of his son, if thine adversary had chanced to be too skilful for thy defence? There is yet another," said the good priest, drawing nigh to the Secretary's ear and speaking almost in a whisper, "who takes this peril even more to heart than father Pierre. Ah, Master Albert, you did not think of them that loved you!"

The Secretary blushed at the last allusion of the priest, as he hurriedly replied, "father, it is over now—let us say no more about it."

"There, the truce is made!" said the old man, exultingly, whilst he grasped Albert by the hand and shook it, a smile playing amongst the tears that stood in his eyes: "We have made a truce—benedicite! We shall be as happy and as gay as ever! Allons, mon enfant, put on thy cloak, and get thee to thy horse. My Lord, we shall reserve our scolding for another time."

"Get back to my house, Master Verheyden," said the Proprietary in a quiet tone, not heeding the appeal to him, but with a thoughtful and serious manner, which stood in marked opposition to the light and laughing air of the priest. "Captain Dauntrees, do not tarry on this field, but follow us back to the Port. Come on, father Pierre, the day is wasting."

In a moment the Captain and Secretary were left to themselves.

"Nay, never take on, Master Verheyden, nor fall into dumps," said Dauntrees, observing that his companion felt the silent displeasure of the Proprietary. "It is ever thus with his Lordship, who, from his cradle, I believe, hath set his heart to the extirpation of our noble art of self-defence. A conceit of his which doth no harm. His face will be sunny again to-morrow—never heed it."

"I cannot see that I have done wrong," replied Albert, with a sigh; "I would not offend his Lordship."

"Tut, man, if you watched his eye, you would have seen in a corner of it, that he likes you all the better for this day's hazard. Now to horse!"

The combatants mounted and rode at a moderate pace to the town.

CHAPTER IV.

I read you by your bugle horn,
And by your palfrey good:
I read you for a Ranger sworn
To keep the king's greenwood.
With burnished brand and musquetoon
So gallantly you come,
I read you for a bold dragoon
That lists the tuck of drum.

SCOTT.

THE Skipper returned to his vessel in no gentle mood, for, in the language of the ballad, "an angry man was he." Springing alertly from the small boat to the deck of the brigantine, he peevishly flung down his weapon and cloak, and paced to and fro, with a hurried step, for some moments in silence. "Give me drink!—some wine!" he exclaimed at length; and when a boy, in obedience to this order, brought him what he had called for, and he had put the liquid to his lips, he shouted in a tone that made the lad tremble, as he threw the glass upon the deck and shivered it into fragments, "knave! why dost thou bring me this weak stuff? I would have aqua vitæ, fool!" The stronger potation being supplied, he

eagerly swallowed a draught, and then threw himself upon the seat at the stern of the vessel, where, for a considerable space, he sat with his eyes fixed upon the broad field of water around him. By degrees the fever of his passion subsided into a sullen thoughtfulness, and he began to meditate, with a more self-possessed consistency of view, over the condition of his affairs. He recurred to the slight put upon him by the maiden, the Secretary's reproof, the contemptuous and insulting rejection of his suit by the Collector, and, bitterest of all these topics of exacerbation, his defeat in the duel by an antagonist whose prowess he had persuaded himself to hold in derision. Verheyden's triumph over him, as he was obliged to confess it, struck like an arrow into his heart: that so light and dainty a minion, as he deemed the Secretary, might win such a victory, and then boast of it to the maiden!—this reflection wrought up to fire the ardour of his hatred and brought his meditation to one stern conclusion—that of revenge.

"I renounce them, their tribe and generation!" he said, mutteringly. "From this day forth, I renounce them and all they consort with—Anthony Warden and his cronies; yes—his Lordship and the rest. I abjure all fellowship with them, but such fellowship as my sword may maintain. The maiden!—not so fast, master!" he continued, with a smile that betrayed the true devil of his nature: "scornful mistress, it would be over charitable to give thee up. Bonny damsel, thou shalt dance a corant yet to my bidding—and on the deck of my merry Escalfador;

but it shall be beneath a warmer sun than thy pride has been nursed in: by my hand, you shall, wench, if there be virtue in these honest cut-throats of mine! And Master Collector shall be cared for. I thank thee, father Pierre, for thy considerateness:—didst thou not let me into a secret touching the royal order? Faith, did you, holy father! and I will make profit of it. Oh, this excellent church quarrel too! I will join Master Chiseldine and Coode, and teach them devilish inventions! Ha! that's a thought worth the nursing—Coode and the Fendalls! We shall have blows struck; we shall have good store of cutlass and hanger-work, pistol-play and dagger! Bravo! there will be feasting for a hungry man! To it, pell-mell, like gentlemen of the Coast—sink, burn, blow-up—stab and hack—ravish and run! St. Iago, but there is a merry sequence for you! Why need the Brotherhood hover over the nestlings of Peru, when we have such dainty deviltries in the temperate zone? I will straight about this plot of mischief, whilst my blood is warm enough to hatch it. Ho! Roche! order me two men into the shallop—I would visit the Port."

Whilst the Skipper, in this amiable temper, was making his way towards the town, I may take the opportunity to give my reader a brief history of certain persons and events with which our tale is now connected.

Josias Fendall, when the Lord Protector had seized upon the Proprietary's rights in Maryland, had the address to obtain the appointment of Lieutenant-General of the province, which he held under this authority, until, by an act of treachery to those

who had procured his preferment, he was able to secure to himself the same post by the commission of Cecilius, when in the decline of Cromwell's power the government was restored to its rightful owner. Having, in turn, attempted to betray the Proprietary, and to usurp an independent control in the government, he was expelled from office; in consequence of which he engaged in a rebellion which, after a troublesome contest, ended in his banishment. The clemency of the Proprietary eventually restored him to the province, where, before the lapse of many months, he fell into his old practices and again embroiled himself with the authorities. He was a man of an eager, seditious temper; a skilful dissembler in conduct; bold in action and dissolute in manners, although sufficiently crafty to conceal his excesses from public observation. He was now, in his old age, the ringleader of the present troubles; and some months anterior to the opening of this narrative, his threats of violence against the Proprietary as well as certain well-founded suspicions of a design to overthrow the provincial government by force, had led to his arrest for treason. He was, consequently, as we have hinted in a former chapter, at this moment, a close prisoner in the gaol. His brother, Samuel Fendall, upon this event, took upon himself to stir up his friends to the enterprise of a rescue; but this had produced no better result than to lodge Samuel in the same prison with his kinsman. The Protestant party,—I mean that portion of them who had been active in sustaining the violent measures set on foot by the Fendalls—headed by John Coode, Kenelm

Chiseldine and some others, hotly resented this persecution, as they deemed the imprisonment of their friends. They had seduced into their association George Godfrey, a weak-minded yet daring man who held the post of Lieutenant of the Rangers in the service of the Proprietary, and who in this station found many secret opportunities to promote the purposes of the malcontent party. John Coode himself was, at this epoch, smarting under the exasperation of a personal indignity which he had recently received from the Proprietary in an arrest,—from which he was released upon bail—for coarse and insulting conduct to the Chancellor. He had hitherto cunningly avoided or successfully concealed all open participation in the plot which was hatching against the present domination of the province, although he had not, as we have heretofore seen, escaped the suspicion of foul designs. He was a member of the House of Burgesses, and, in the session which had just terminated, had rendered himself conspicuous for a keen, vindictive, and (as he was sustained by the popular party) successful war of vituperation against Lord Baltimore and his council.

About four o'clock in the afternoon, this Captain John Coode, according to a custom which he was prone to indulge, was found seated on a bench that stood at the door of the Crow and Archer, recreating his outward man with the solace of a tankard of ale and a pipe, whilst his inward self was absorbed with a rumination that spread its bland repose over every lineament of his ruddy and somewhat pimpled visage. A limner who took pleasure in the study of the ex-

ternals of character would have halted with satisfaction before this notable personage. He might have been, at this epoch, about forty-five. His figure was sturdy, broad in the chest and supported by short legs that bowed a little outward. His face had that jollity of aspect which comes from an unthrifty commerce with the wine cup; and his eye, though somewhat clouded and sensitive to the light, twinkled with a sharp expression of cunning and malice. His dress was of sober brown, retaining a general resemblance to the fashion of Cromwell's day, which had not yet fallen into entire disuse. It was composed of a coat the skirts of which, sparingly decorated with black braid, depended, both in front and rear, to the knee; ample breeches and wide boots; conical, broad-brimmed hat, and a double-hilted Andrew Ferrara hanging from a leathern girdle.

At the moment I have introduced him to the view of my reader, his meditation was interrupted by the arrival of a horseman,—a tall, athletic person, in the prime of manhood, equipped partly in the manner of a wood ranger, as was indicated by the hatchet and knife in his belt and the carbine slung across his shoulder, and partly in that of a dragoon—betokened by his horseman's sword and the pistols at his saddle-bow.

"Master Coode, your servant," was the greeting of the rider whilst he dismounted and flung the rein carelessly upon the neck of his steed, whose head drooped and sides panted with the toil of his recent journey: "Your ale is like to grow flat from a lack of thirst:—I can supply that commodity," he said,

as he took up the tankard and deliberately drained it to the bottom.

"By G—, Lieutenant, you had as well help yourself without my leave!" exclaimed Coode with a laugh. "Where in the d—l are you from now?"

"From Potapaco and the parts above," replied Godfrey, (for it was no other than the Lieutenant of the Rangers:) "that painted devil Manahoton and his wild cats have been prowling around the upper settlements. There have been throat-cutting and scalping again. Red haired Tom Galloway was waylaid on his road to Zacaiah Fort, and the savages stole into his plantation and have murdered his wife and children. Nothing but speed and bottom saved me to-day: a party with that son of Tiquassino's—Robin Hood, they call him—at least I suspect *him* for it, from a limp which I saw in the fellow's walk—lay in cover and fired at me, just over there at the head of Britton's bay. They must have been in liquor, for they popped their pieces so much at random, as to strike wide both of me and my horse. I gave them a parting volley, as far as pistols and carbine served and then bade them good by."

"I dare be sworn they were stirred up to these attacks," replied Coode. "These bloody Papists have set a mark upon us all, and not only rouse the savages against us, but disguise themselves, and murder and burn with as hot a hand as the worst red devil of them all. Whilst Charles Calvert is allowed to hector it over the good people of the province, we may hope for nothing better. Did you see Will Clements?"

"I did, and have news from him that the Huttons and Hatfields, with twenty more on the Virginia side, are ready to cross the river at the first signal."

"Have a care, Lieutenant," whispered Coode, as he cast his eye towards the quay; "here comes a boat with that fellow Cocklescraft, one of his Lordship's lurchers. It would do you no good to be seen in parley with me. We meet to-night, at Chiseldine's. Let me see you there: and now, away to your own concerns."

"I will not fail to go to Chiseldine's, worthy Master Coode," replied the Lieutenant, whilst he now turned aside to look after his beast.

"What ho! Garret Weasel, send me some one to this horse!" he cried out as he thrust his head into the door of the inn.

Instead of the innkeeper, the summons was answered by Matty Scamper who, with a courtesy, announced that both Master Garret and the landlady were abroad; and upon being made acquainted with the Lieutenant's wish, took upon herself the business of ostler and led off the jaded steed to the stable, whilst Godfrey entered the hostel. At the same instant Cocklescraft arrived at the door.

"Perhaps you could tell me, Master Coode," he inquired, "whether Kenelm Chiseldine is likely to be at home?"

"Faith, most unlikely as I should guess," replied the burgess with a leer at the questioner. "Whilst his Lordship allows the savages to shoot down and scalp the honest people of the province, here under

his very nose, a wise man will learn who his visiter may be, before he will allow himself to be seen."

"Master Chiseldine has nothing to fear from me," said Cocklescraft. "I would I might see him," he added with an earnestness that forcibly attracted Coode's attention.

"Why what, in the devil's name, have you to do with Kenelm Chiseldine?"

"More than you suspect, sir. I would speak with him on affairs of importance. It perhaps may concern you to hear what I have to say."

"God's wounds, man!—speak out, if thou hast aught to say against me or my friends. This shall be a free land for speech, Master Cocklescraft—free to all men: it is so already, let me tell you, to us who wear our swords—however his Lordship and his Lordship's brangling church-bullies would fain force it down our throats to be silent, with what you call sedition."

"Your flurry is but spent breath, Master Coode. If you will allow me an instant's private speech with you, I will open myself in somewhat that may be for your interest to hear. The bench of a public tavern does not well become the matter of my speaking."

"Ha, a private conference and on matter of moment!" ejaculated Coode. "Then follow me, Master Cocklescraft, by the Town House path, amongst the cedars on yon bank. Now, sir, you may speak your mind though it were enough to hang a country side," said Coode, as he strode slowly in advance of

the Skipper until they found themselves enveloped by the thicket of cedar.

"I have heard it whispered," quoth the Skipper, "since my arrival in the port, that you and others have been brewing mischief, and are like to come to scratches with his Lordship's men of the buff."

"And dost thou come to me with this fool's errand, Master Skipper?" interrupted the burgess. "Are you sent hither, sirrah, to drain me of a secret which you may commend to the notice of the Proprietary for your own advancement in his good favour? By my hilt, I have a mind to rap thee about the pate with my whinyard!"

"Tush, cool thy courage, valiant Captain, or spend it where it may give thee more profit. I come to thicken thy hell-broth with new spices of my own devising,—not to mar it. I say again, I have heard it whispered that you have bloody fancies in the wind. I care not to inquire what they are, but knowing thou hast no good will towards the Council and their friends, I have a hand to help in any devil's crotchet your plot may give life to. Besides, the Olive Branch is a more spiteful imp than she looks to be,—and you may, perchance, stand in need, hereafter, of a salt water help-mate. I can commend her to thy liking, Captain Coode."

Coode gazed with a steadfast and incredulous eye, for some moments, in the face of the Skipper. At last he asked—"Art thou in earnest, Master Cockles-craft?—By G— if thou comest here to entrap me, I will have thee so bestowed that the kites shall feed

upon thy bowels before the breath be out of thy body!"

"And so they may, if I deceive you," replied the Skipper, coolly. "Put me to the proof, Captain,—put me to the proof, and if I fail thou mayst fatten all the kites of St. Mary's with my body."

"Are you willing to say this before witnesses?" inquired Coode.

"A legion—if they hate the friends of the Council as I hate them."

"Then come to-night to Master Chiseldine's. You shall find me and others there. Until then, it may be wise that we hold no more discourse together. And so now we part."

Cocklescraft promised to keep the appointment, and took his leave of the burgess who walked onward to the Town House. Here, Coode found Willy of the Flats busy in setting up against the trunk of the mulberry a sheet of paper, designed, according to the custom of the town, to advertise some matter of interest to the inhabitants. To the question "What have you in the wind, Willy?"—the fiddler's reply was an invitation to the Captain to inform himself by a perusal of the paper. He accordingly read as follows:

"ORDER OF COUNCIL.

"License given to Stark Whittle and Sergeant Travers to play a prize at the several weapons belonging to the Noble Science (such as shall be agreed on by them) publickly at such place in or near St.

Marie's City, as they shall for this day appoint: provided that no foul play be used, nor any riott or disturbance tending to the breach of his Lordship's peace, be by them or any of their associates thereupon offered. Dated at his Lordship's mansion, in the City of St. Marie's this 9th day of October, Anno Domini, 1681.

"J. Llewellin, Clerk."

"On the common, behind the Town House in St. Marie's City, by permission of an order of Council, as above recited, a trial of skill shall be performed between Stark Whittle and Sergeant Gilbert Travers, two masters of the Noble Science of Defence, at four of the clock in the afternoon of Thursday the twenty-third of October instant.

"I, Stark Whittle, of the town of Stratford, England, who have fought thirty-one times at Hockley in the Hole, at Portugal and in divers parts of the West Indies, and never left a stage to any man, do invite Gilbert Travers to meet and exercise at the several weapons following, viz:

Back Sword, Sword and Buckler,
Sword and Dagger, Case of Falchons,
Single Falchon.

"I, Gilbert Travers, sergeant of musqueteers, who formerly served in the Walloon Guard of his Highness the Prince of Orange, and hath held the degree of Master of the Noble Science of Defence in forty-seven prizes, besides four that I fought as a provost

before I took said degree, will not, in regard to the fame of Stark Whittle, fail to meet this brave inviter at the time and place appointed; desiring a clear stage and from him no favour.

"VIVAT REX."

"This promises well, for a fair sport, Willy," said Coode; "they are both pretty fellows with the sword. Who has set this matter a foot?"

"I heard, an it please your worship," replied the fiddler; "it is near a fortnight since,—that Stark Whittle and the Sergeant, being together at an ale-drinking, on an afternoon, at Master Weasel's ordinary, and having got into a merry pin, must needs fall into an argument, and thereupon into a debate, as men commonly do now-a-days, upon church matters. Whereupon Stark,—you know, Master Coode," said Willy, touching the burgess on the rib with his knuckle and speaking, in a confidential tone, with a short dry laugh,—"Stark is a born devil on our side of the question,—whereupon he raises his voice against the mumbling of masses, as he calls it, and the pictures and images and the rest of the trumpery;—while the Sergeant sticks up, like a true soldier, for the army of martyrs and the canons and what not besides. So, when words got high, and Stark began to be puzzled by some of Gilbert's quiddities which he learned from the priests,—he whips off from the church and turns the discourse upon sword-craft. And thereupon, after some crowing by Gilbert, Stark takes him short with a challenge to play a prize—which the Sergeant accepted,

out of hand. Then it was left to Colonel Talbot to bring it to the Council, and the next thing I hear of it is that Colonel Talbot sends me here to set this writing, concerning the whole matter, against the mulberry before the Town House door."

Before Willy had got through this account of the origin of Stark Whittle's challenge, Godfrey had come to the spot.

"We may find an occasion in this prize fight that shall jump with our plot, Lieutenant," said Coode. "What think you Richard Cocklescraft had to tell me?"

"I cannot guess."

"Why, that these shavelings who meddle so much in the affairs of the province and rule the Council, are downright knaves;—that his Lordship is no better than a sneaking dotard; the Council themselves but white-livered whelps of the litter of Babylon, and that the whole brood of craw thumpers, taking in master and serving-man all round, are but scurvy thieves who deserve, each and all, to be set in the stocks. Now, there is a wise Skipper!—a clear-sighted, conscientious wight, who has seen his errors and confesses them honestly! This Master Cocklescraft has promised me to meet us at Chiseldine's to-night, which I put it to him to do by way of test to his honesty. If he come not there, I shall hold that he has cozened me with a base, juggling, papistical lie. And in that case, George Godfrey, I desire you to set thy mark upon him;—dost hear? So, until we meet again at Master Chiseldine's, good even, Lieutenant."

The residence of Chiseldine stood upon the river, a short distance beyond the upper limits of the town, from which it was separated by the small creek which I have heretofore described as bounding the common. This creek at its embouchure where it crossed the river beach, was reduced into a narrow strait, scarcely, in the ordinary state of the tides, beyond the compass of an active man's leap. Here a small bridge gave to the townspeople access at all times to the dwelling house of Master Chiseldine.

When the twilight had subsided, some three or four visiters were found assembled under this roof, and their number in the course of an hour was gradually increased to as many more. Amongst these, Coode and Godfrey were the first to arrive; they were soon followed by a person of no small influence in stimulating the disorders of that time,—the Reverend Master Yeo—an active and subtle churchman of the English church, whose emaciated figure, meek countenance and puritanical simplicity of costume, contrasted with a restless and passion-fraught eye, presented an impersonation of a busy, political ecclesiastic. The host, Master Kenelm Chiseldine, though a young man, had already arrived at some authority in the House of Burgesses by his persevering and zealous hostility to the Proprietary, and had, through the popularity which generally follows resistance to the established order of things, obtained such a control over the course of that unhappy dissension which agitated the peace of the province, as entitled him to be considered, in modern phrase, one of the leaders of the movement. He now appeared in this

conclave, in that mixed character of burgher and soldier—partially armed, though professing the pursuits of a man of peace—which the disturbances of the period had rendered common amongst the inhabitants. Conspicuous, at least for his estimate of himself, in this assemblage, whither the love of having something to do, and a thirst for a patriot's immortality had lured him, was little Corporal Abbot the tailor—a wight remarkable for the vast disproportion between the smallness of his person and the greatness of his aspirations, and still more remarkable for an upspringing walk and an ambitious, erect carriage of the head. Stricken with the grandeur of Lieutenant Godfrey's achievements, and emulous of like glory in the field of Mars, he had, by degrees, wormed himself into an intimacy with the Lieutenant, who one day, in a freak, settled the little hero's destiny, by enlisting him for a special campaign with the Rangers. In the course of this tour of duty, which lasted sixty days, Ned Abbot had the good fortune to capture three Indian women, whom he took for warriors belonging to the tribe of King Tiquassino—a chief whose name diffused a common terror through the province. The Rangers conspired to magnify the hazard and glory of this exploit, and his commander exalted him to the honourable and responsible duties of a corporal. Ever since that event, the tailor looked upon himself as a martialist approved in battle and entitled to boast of his prowess. Being thus seduced into the list of fame, he became a devoted adherent of the Lieutenant, and, as is customary amongst the votaries of greater men than

even Lieutenant George Godfrey, he suffered himself to be embarked in all the hazards and committed to all the consequences of his leader's political imbroglios. The corporal's time was divided between the needle and the broadsword;—at one season, when work was slack, playing the man of war in bloodless forays, and at another, when fighting was superabundant, stitching doublets and patching decayed jerkins, with a commendable tranquillity of spirit.

Such were the principal personages who were now convened to deliberate upon the course of that secret rebellion which, in a few years later than this period, terminated in what is known in the history of Maryland as the Protestant Revolution. Their more immediate purpose was to devise measures for the rescue or liberation of the Fendalls. Towards the accomplishment of this design, the discontented in various parts of the province had associated under private forms of organization, and held themselves in readiness to obey the signal for an out-break, whenever the leaders amongst the burgesses should determine the fit moment to have arrived. When these persons were once banded together in arms, their plan was to drive matters to an immediate issue with the Proprietary, by seizing the Fort, and even by assailing his person. Their general scheme of rebellion was supposed to derive its hopes of success not only from the increasing bitterness which daily grew up between the two religious sects, but from the avowed inclination of the Court at White Hall to give an established church to the province, and to restrain the exercise of religious toleration against

the catholic party. Add to this the fact that a preponderating majority of the inhabitants were of the protestant faith, and it will be seen that the conspirators had no very strong reason to apprehend any fatal miscarriage of their scheme.

It was late before Cocklescraft made his appearance in this assembly. He had gone into the inn, where he remained in solitude until after nightfall; and when the retiring day had left every thing in shade, he sallied forth and indulged his moody and fevered temper in lonely musing, as he rambled through the town and along the margin of the river. Callous as he was to the ordinary sensibilities of humanity, it cost him a struggle to pursue his vindictive purpose to the extent of making war against that faith, the devotion to which, in his bosom, was superstition—a superstition that clung to his mind through all the iniquities of his life amongst the Brothers of the Coast, and which he now trembled to renounce. His self-communing on this subject had wrought him up to a state of mind that bordered upon insanity, exhibiting itself, at times, in bursts of apparently jocular recklessness, and driving him to the stimulus of strong drink.

His absence from Chiseldine's began to be remarked. Master Yeo had already let fall—when Coode spoke of his interview with the Skipper—some expressions of distrust in the sincerity of such a conversion as the tale implied; and more than one of the company hinted at a trick contrived by the Papists to entrap them. Private mutterings of dissatisfaction and threats of retribution were growled in whispered

tones. Corporal Abbot was remarkably fierce and denunciatory. "By my sword, neighbours!" he said, with a scowling eye-brow, "an' I find it should turn out that we have been paltered with by that briny ruffler, it shall go hard with him but he shall find that I wear cold iron,—if he learn as much from never a man in the town beside. And as we are all here together, where we may speak our minds," he added in a stage-whisper, with a significant solemnity of manner, "I would have you know I do not put too much faith in the honesty of these absolution and purgatory men: they are fishy—fishy, masters," he said, laying his finger against his nose, and looking portentously mysterious. "To my seeming, this Richard Cocklescraft ever had a hang-dog——"

"Ay, that's true—a hang-dog devil in his looks," said Cocklescraft himself, taking the parole from the speaker, as he strode into the room immediately behind the Corporal, who stood near the door. His brow was flushed, his air hurried and disturbed, and he had entered the outer door without knocking or ceremony of announcement, and thus came into the apartment where the meeting was assembled, at unawares, and at the moment that his name was upon the Corporal's lips. His cap was drawn conceitedly over one side of his forehead, and his scabbarded sword, detached from the belt, was borne in his hand. A constrained smile gave a disagreeable and unusual expression to his features, and there was an air of affected jovialty in his carriage when he interrupted the boasting martialist and accosted the company. "Nay, Master Corporal, thou need'st not shrink, for

thy brave speaking: 'tis a license of a man of the wars to rail at such as leave their colours; and as I have left mine, I stand under your reproof.—God save you, my masters, for a set of merry contrivers of mischief! By St. Iago, but you make a snug house of it here together! Master Chiseldine, Captain Coode would have me come here to-night to speak before witnesses. Presto, change! is the word. I have done with the cowls and the cassocks, and with all who bow to the honourable Council: I have done with my lords gentlemen of taffeta and buckram;—yea, and have a reckoning to make which shall be remembered in Maryland. Santo Rosario! but I *will* make it," he added, as he spoke through his clenched teeth, "when the foremost man amongst you all shall cry shame for pity!—We shall forswear water-drinking, comrades! I have renounced it today: for an hour past I have fed upon the milk of Scheidam—most wholesome usquebaugh, without taint of Papistry in it: I fetched it myself from Holland to the Crow and Archer. Ha! it has baptized me in the faith of our new quarrel. I will swear by it as your only holy water!"

"Master Cocklescraft, I would you had brought us a cooler head—though you are not the less welcome," said Chiseldine. "Think you, sir, you can strike, if there be need for it, at those you have lately consorted with?"

"Strike!" exclaimed Cocklescraft, "Ay, by Saint Anthony, can I strike! on the broad sea, or green land,—in pell-mell or orderly fight,—amongst pikes

and musquets, or grenades and culverins. I can strike with sword or dagger,—at waking man, or sleeping babe—grey head or green:—strike, Master Chiseldine, to drum and trumpet, or to the music of shrieking wives and sobbing maidens. I have been nursed to the craft. What else should have brought me here to-night?"

"A most monstrous and horrid papistical schooling the wolf has had!" piously ejaculated Master Yeo, in the ear of a neighbour. "This fellow would have been a Guido Fawkes in time."

"We must use him, nevertheless, reverend Master Yeo," said Coode; "we shall teach him gentleness, when we have got over the rough work of our plot."

The Parson assented by a nod of the head; and then approaching the Skipper, inquired, "What argument, worthy Master Cocklescraft, hath persuaded you to renounce your old associates? There may be much edification in the experience of a man so thoroughly converted."

"That concerns no man here," replied the seaman bluntly. "Enough for you, sir, that I have changed my colours. I come to you not alone, neither: I have men to back me, and follow where I lead, and a trim bark which may serve a turn when you are put in straits. If you will have service out of me, I ask no return for it, but that you set quickly about the work. Do you want motive for present quarrel? I can give it to you. I know it for a truth, that the King hath sent orders hither to dislodge every Papist from his office in this province; and I know, further, that the Council do, upon deliberation,

refuse to obey the King's bidding. There is a handle for rebellion which may serve you for a throat-cutting! But what is a royal order to Charles Calvert if the wind of his humour set contrary against it? A feather.—Who are they that counsel my Lord Baltimore? The men that feed their own idleness on the substance of the honest folk who toil;—the men who flatter his Lordship with crafty courtesies. First amongst them is that old grout-head, Anthony Warden: I would have you note him, masters, for a chief leech; a most topping blood-sucker. To whom should the offices of this province belong? To such as the good pleasure of the Burgesses may appoint——"

"Surely," grunted Coode.

"To such as the King would have—"

"Without question," breathed the reverend Parson Yeo.

"Then, there are reasons for rebellion as thick as you could wish, masters," continued Cocklescraft, by way of close to an harangue which showed him qualified to take a rank amongst the demagogues of the time not inferior to that of the most successful masters of the art of agitation at the present day. "So, fall to, and make yourselves worshipful dignitaries,—men of consideration amongst your neighbours: I am here to help."

"Bravely spoken!" shouted Coode, as the Skipper concluded this successful essay in political oratory, whilst several voices re-echoed the commendation; "that is the true aspect of our plot, and Master Cocklescraft shows himself a worthy and apt scholar. The sooner we come to buffets the better. We have

force enough to match the pikes and musquets of his Lordship, and make ourselves masters of the Fort. By a placard set against the mulberry at the Town House this afternoon, it seems we are to have a prize play between Stark Whittle and Sergeant Travers, come next Wednesday week. This will not fail to bring our friends of the country swarming to the sport, and the occasion will be apt for us to manage the appointments of a general revolt."

This suggestion receiving the countenance of the conclave, was adopted, and the execution of the particulars committed to Coode himself. For the present, it was thought adviseable that no immediate step be taken in reference to the rescue of the Fendalls, as it was very obvious, from various intelligence which had been brought to the conspirators, that a crisis was near at hand which must be decisive of the question of strength between the two parties.

After this the company gradually dispersed.

CHAPTER V.

She sat hie on the tap tower stane,
Nae waiting may was there;
She lows'd the gowd busk frae her breast,
The kaim frae 'mang her hair,
She wip'd the tear blobs frae her ee,
An' looked lang and sair.

THE MERMAID OF GALLOWAY.

IT is proper, before we move onward with our tale, to give some account of affairs at the Rose Croft, towards which the interest of our lady readers especially, is very naturally directed.

After Willy of the Flats had departed with the missive that was designed to frustrate the duel, there was, for a considerable time, a general restlessness manifested by the household, extending from Alice Warden and Blanche, downward through the entire roll of domestics; for Willy had not omitted to avail himself of the occasion to give Mistress Coldcale a circumstantial history of the whole affair of the quarrel between the Skipper and the Secretary, in the presence of Michael Mossbank, as well as of the housemaids, the cook and the scullion, all of whom

were opportunely assembled in the kitchen, at work amongst the litter and wreck of the last night's feast, and were, of course, thrown by the recital into a condition of most extraordinary doubt and curiosity as to the upshot of the adventure. The restlessness to which I have referred seemed equally to defy the consolations of philosophy and the power of remaining stationary in any one place, by any one body, for two consecutive minutes. The common topic of apprehension was that Willy might not reach father Pierre in season, or if he did, that father Pierre might not find aid at hand to intercept the combatants; two very reasonable grounds of distrust, which brought about that nervous agitation which is not uncommon in female councils. In the present case, after much tribulation and perplexity in the two sisters, it was thought expedient to call Mistress Coldcale to the consultation regarding what was proper to be done in the emergency; and the matter was now entertained in an ambulatory debate, commencing in the parlour, and moving successively into the hall, thence up stairs to a chamber window, down again to the front door, and finally to the verge of the cliff, at the extremity of the lawn overlooking the river. At this last spot, Mistress Coldcale cast her eyes over the water, and there discovered the Skipper's brigantine, which, as my reader is aware, had been dropped down to this anchorage early in the morning. This phenomenon straightway suggested a most ingenious expedient, which, from the vivacity of its enunciation, it was obvious the housekeeper considered as decisive of the question under deliberation.

"Good luck the while!" she exclaimed, "if there is not Master Cocklescraft's own vessel, the Olive Branch, lying, fast and firm, in the very mouth of the creek. How lucky for us! The Skipper, Mistress Alice, as sure as we are women, is on board, and intends to go thence to Cornwaleys's Cross;—now, as he must come within hail of our landing, we have only to station Michael Mossbank here with the long Spanish fowling-piece, and cause him to warn Cocklescraft, in the name of Master Warden, to forbear coming up the creek on peril of his life. Your father did so in Fendall's first rebellion, when Sawahega and his men frightened the priests of St. Inigoe's yonder out of their wits, by sailing into the creek. Why should n't we try it with the Skipper? Michael shall fire upon him if he dare to make light of the warning; and lest bloodshed might come of it, the gardener may take his aim somewhat aslant and overhead. I will promise you, no sailor ventures another stroke of an oar forward after that."

"Mercy on us, Mistress Bridget!" ejaculated Alice Warden, "would you involve us in a war with the Skipper and his surly comrades?"

"At least till Master Anthony Warden, your worshipful father, comes home and takes the matter into his own hands, I would make war, as we may, against Cocklescraft, or any one else that should come into our waters to harm Master Albert. Troth, would I!"

"I am sure, I do not know what to do," said Blanche, not heeding the belligerent device of the housekeeper, and looking ruefully, through a tear,

over the waste of waters—"I am sure I do not know what to do, unless it be to send for our dear Lady Maria."

As this last seemed to be the most practicable hint which had yet been suggested, it was seized upon and adopted with surprising unanimity; and the consultation was immediately adjourned to carry it into operation. Mistress Alice and the housekeeper hurried to speed measures to that end, and Blanche remained fixed upon the bank in a brown study, apparently watching the people upon the deck of the brigantine.

Luckily, before Michael Mossbank could make ready a horse to do the errand which Mistress Alice had confided to him, the Lady Maria was descried, approaching the house, mounted on her ambling pony, and followed by a body-guard in the shape of an old serving-man of the Lord Proprietary. In brief space she alighted at the door.

The good lady had heard nothing of the tidings which had diffused such sadness over the household at the Rose Croft, and, it may be imagined, now received them with a manifestation of concern commensurate not only with her regard for the Secretary, but also with the peculiar solicitude which it seemed to be her province to extend over all matters relating to the affairs of the young people within her brother's dominion.

"Oh, the bloody-minded Skipper! and oh, rash Master Albert!" she exclaimed, after the narrative was concluded. "I foresaw it—I dreamed of it—I almost knew some mischief was hatching, ever since

that wicked look which I marked the Skipper give to Master Albert, when the Secretary chided him for being too free in his importunity regarding the mantle—as you may remember, Blanche."

"I wish the fingers of the sempstress over sea had been blistered ere they stitched that foul mantle," said Blanche, "and the Skipper in the bottom of the Red Sea, that brought it here!"

"I would rather wish that Master Albert should find no Skipper at Cornwaleys's Cross to-day," returned the lady, not knowing exactly what to wish; "or that no such place as Cornwaleys's Cross was to be found in the province."

"Find no Skipper there!" exclaimed Blanche; "if a poor wish of mine might bring it to pass, Master Albert's sword should deal so sharply with him that he should never again set foot in the Port. It all comes of that foolish birth-day ball which I must needs be persuaded by Grace Blackiston to give. I would I were not eighteen for five years to come!"

"If harm should befall Master Albert," interposed the housekeeper, who felt herself privileged in this time of general tribulation to give her opinion, "it would be for your comfort that you never saw nor would see eighteen. If I were Mistress Blanche, I know I should never find my natural rest again, to lose so sweet a gentleman as the Secretary. But the crosses of this life come not by desert, nor spare the best, as the proverb says. I fear the Skipper is an overmatch for Master Albert."

"Surely, Mistress Coldcale," said Blanche, nettled at the housekeeper's freedom, as well as at her under-

valuing the Secretary's prowess, "thou hast no warrant for such speech. Master Albert hath a valiant heart and a hand to defend himself, and may match with the Skipper in any quarrel. And if he were not his match," she added, with an ill-concealed struggle to appear indifferent to the result, "he is no kinsman of mine, I trow, that I should wish myself dead." And having thus given vent to an emotion suggested by that reserve which a maiden feels who first begins to be conscious of a secret affection for a lover,—a sentiment that until this day had slumbered unacknowledged at her heart,—she covered her face with her hands, and left the room, to weep in private.

At the top of the Collector's dwelling was a small balcony or platform that had been constructed for an observatory, from which vessels approaching the Port might be descried with a perspective glass at the most remote seaward point. From this elevation, looking inland, the road leading from the town around the head of St. Inigoe's, might be discerned for some extent along the plain, and at intervals, through the forest, where it became tangled amongst the hills. To this balcony, in the disquietude of her mind, Blanche had gone secretly to look out upon the road and note those who travelled upon it, hoping by this means to satisfy herself on that anxious question whether any persons were abroad to prevent the duel. Long she gazed there, with her brow shaded by her hand; and when within an hour of noon, she discerned two figures, on horseback, moving upon the hill-side almost at a walk,—it was with an emotion that produced a shudder through her frame that she

recognised at that distance the short dark cloak and the low cap and feather of the Secretary.

"Oh, blessed Mother!" she exclaimed involuntarily, "it is Master Albert: our care has been but lost. So leisurely he moves along, his path has not been followed; nor is it like to be, for noon has almost come, and I see no father Pierre behind, although the road is open townward to my sight full two good miles. And he hath Master Dauntrees with him, as I take that companion to be; and Master Dauntrees would not guide him so much at ease if there were followers. —Jesu Maria! hither comes the Skipper's boat, skimming the water with such speed as makes it sure he shall reach the Cross in time," she continued, as she turned her eye from the land to the river, and saw the shallop cleaving the surface of St. Inigoe's creek, abreast the Rose Croft, under the lusty stroke of two oarsmen, and bearing Cocklescraft and his comrades, so near to her that she was able to distinguish, upon the bench of the boat, the swords which were to be used in the combat. "Well-a-day! it is a foredoomed trial, which may not be averted by any caution of mine. The Holy Martyrs guard our good Master Albert, and turn danger from his path! as for his gentleness and bravery he doth deserve."

The maiden muttered these short and almost incoherent aspirations, half in self-communion, half in prayer, during which a melancholy expression of distress rested upon her countenance, and often, like the forsaken lady of the ballad,

> "She wip'd the tear blobs frae her ee,
> An' looked lang and sair."

Whilst she thus indulged her secret grief, voices were heard below in the court-yard.

"It is the Skipper's boat, Michael Mossbank," said the voice of Bridget Coldcale, "and the Skipper in it, with his rufflers at his side. The fowling piece, Michael!—the long Spanish gun you shoot ducks with in the winter!—haste ye, man, and fetch it, or they will be out of thy reach! Was ever such a lurdan—such a poking old elf!—I have the heart to load and fire with my own hand. These headstrong men!"

"Go to thy kitchen-craft, thou silly-witted woman!" returned the voice of the gardener, with a hoarse laugh; "thou 'rt a fool with thy prating of the fowling piece! Take a ladle of hot water and fling it in the wind—it will scald yon sailors, perchance—'tis but a furlong cast: the creek is but a half mile wide."

"It was not so wide, thou crusty mole catcher, but that his worship from this bank could turn that savage Sawahega and his canoes back as they came, I warrant you."

"Tush, dame Bridget, get thee to peeling onions!—What dost thou know of Sawahega and his canoes? Were there not fifty of us with musket and culverin to boot!—Let these women prate and the world will be so thick set with lies that they will darken the light of the sun—a man would lose his way in daytime, unless he bore a lantern."

This last hit of the gardener's seemed to be decisive, for the voice of Mistress Coldcale was imme-

diately afterwards heard in the house, showing that she had evidently retreated.

"Ah!" cried the maiden, who still retained her position in the balcony, as she now unexpectedly discerned the figures of the Proprietary and father Pierre riding at a pretty brisk gait along the plain from the direction of the town—"a blessing on him! Father Pierre hath got our message and is on his way with his good Lordship. The saints lend them speed!—though I fear they go too late. The Skipper's boat hath turned into St. Luke's and will be at the Cross ere his Lordship reach the hills,—though when he reach the hills his journey is but half performed."

It was not long after this that she heard the bell of St. Inigoe's across the creek, pealing its customary announcement of noon, and still the Proprietary and the priest had not yet ceased to be observed on the road descending from the highland. The boat of the Skipper had disappeared in the recesses of St. Luke's, and the Secretary with his companion had already abundant time to reach the appointed ground of the combat. Overcome by doubt, suspense and apprehension, Blanche retreated, with a stealthy step, as if afraid even to hear the noise of her own foot-fall to her chamber, and there, with a throbbing heart and trembling frame, threw herself upon her bed. In this condition she lay conjuring up the phantoms of her imagination, and giving full scope to that distressing augury of evil which, in moments when we are compelled passively to contemplate the

dangers to which those we love are exposed, impels us by an almost superstitious presentiment to believe and expect the worst. When two hours and more had elapsed, the housekeeper with precipitate haste thrust herself panting into the chamber, and roused the maiden from this unhappy meditation, with an abruptly-communicated piece of news.

"His Lordship has made safe work of it, Mistress Blanche,—most joyful work of it!—bless him for a charitable, careful, pains-taking Lord,—and bless you, Mistress Blanche, for your thoughtful wisdom in sending to father Pierre. Oh, I have happy news for you!"

"Tell it, I pray you, Mistress Bridget!"

"Michael Mossbank, my dear young lady, comes but now, riding in at full speed from the mill of St. Inigoe's, where he went an hour ago to have a chat with goodman Bolt the miller—"

"In mercy, tell me the pith of this story at once," interposed the maiden with an impatience which could not brook the housekeeper's prolixity.

"Well, there, Michael spied, as he was talking to the miller,—he spied, riding along the road from Cornwaleys's Cross towards the town, who do you think?—Why, his Lordship and father Pierre, both looking as long faced as the oldest drudge-horse that takes a meal bag to mill—and after them, some good distance behind, riding as silent as if they were going to a funeral, Master Albert,—our dear Master Albert,—and that old sinner and evil adviser, Captain Dauntrees of the Fort. And as this plainly signified that all was over and no harm done, Michael mounts

his nag and comes clinking home here as fast as four legs can bring him. Is n't it precious news, Mistress?"

"Art sure of it, Mistress Coldcale?" demanded Blanche, with a sudden sunshine bursting out upon her face and chasing away the clouds of grief which but a moment before lowered upon it—"Art truly sure of it, sweet Bridget?"

"As sure of it,—bless you for a happy young lady! —as that my name was Bridget Skewer till my dear goodman, peace to his bones! changed it into Coldcale."

Blanche laughed outright, and went straight into the parlour to share the pleasure of this piece of intelligence with her sister and the Lady Maria. These ladies, however, had already been apprised of all that the housekeeper had told to the maiden, and the pony being in waiting at the door, the sister of the Proprietary hurried off with a speed stimulated by her eagerness to learn every thing from her brother, leaving Alice and the maiden happy in finding that at least no serious harm had befallen the Secretary.

Albert Verheyden, although keenly sensitive to the displeasure of the Proprietary, in reviewing his conduct throughout the quarrel with the Skipper, felt a lively satisfaction at the course he had pursued. The provocation had been so flagrant and the bearing of Cocklescraft towards him so evidently exasperated by the favour he had won from the maiden, that it was with a natural exultation he looked back upon the recent meeting and its result. His sentiment towards his adversary in this retrospect, was

somewhat of the nature of that imputed, in the metrical tale, to the Chieftain at his triumph over his unnatural brothers—

> "I trow ye wad hae gi'en me the skaith,
> But I've gi'en you the scorn."

He had foiled his enemy at his boasted weapon, and sent him humbled from the field. But what was chiefly pleasing to him in the review was, that the strife had arisen in the cause of Blanche Warden, and that he had, like a knight of ancient adventure, rescued her from the importunity of a disagreeable suitor. The reproof of the Proprietary was almost lost sight of in the gratulation of his own heart upon the successful issue of this his first essay of manhood; and, besides, he felt a secret consciousness that however his Lordship might openly chide him for this infraction of the law, still he could not undervalue him for his prompt resentment of an offence to which, especially in that age, it would have been a foul dishonour to submit. Then the bland interposition and affectionate support of father Pierre, who rebuked as became a churchman the rude appeal to arms, and yet stood by him as a friend to share the pleasure of his triumph, gave him still further confidence that he should lose neither the countenance nor the esteem of the Proprietary by what had happened. With a disburdened heart, therefore, and a contented spirit of self-approbation, he went to his bed that night, and enjoyed a sleep as refreshing and deep as the slumber of childhood.

The duel was attended by another consequence

still more important. The Secretary had become the champion of the maiden of the Rose Croft, and it was no more than a natural sequence, justified and approved by all experience, that he should claim to think of her as his mistress, and to render the open homage of a lover. Heretofore his demeanour towards her had been marked by a quiet humility, an almost worshipping deference—reserved and struggling to conceal the passion which glowed in his bosom: but he now became aware of a sudden change in his estimate of himself, and of a consciousness that his manhood entitled him to speak to the mistress of his heart with bolder speech and more unquestionable pretension.

When morning broke upon him it found his spirits enlivened by gay thoughts, and his countenance made cheerful by the impression of pleasant dreams, —dreams that had conducted him into fairy bowers where all the images that enchanted his view bore some reference to the Rose of St. Mary's. He sprang from his couch with the buoyancy of unusual health, and, whilst he made his toilet, his mind ran with an impatient resolve upon an early visit to the Rose Croft.

Accordingly, as soon in the day as he might with propriety visit at the Collector's dwelling—for all at once he grew scrupulous as to these observances which, until now, had never entered into his reckonings—he was mounted on his steed and forth and away, a gallant cavalier seeking the bower of his lady-love.

When he arrived at the Rose Croft, Blanche and

her father were just prepared to set out on a morning's walk, and were upon the lawn sauntering around the rustic temple which contained the altar of St. Therese.

"Welcome, Master Verheyden," said the Collector with a brisk and cordial greeting; "heartily welcome! Zounds, man, you had brought us into a fine coil yesterday!—my women here, Alice and Blanche, yea and Mistress Bridget and Meg and Sue,—the whole of them,—were as much astir as if the Sinniquoes had made an inroad upon us. You have been playing the swashing buckler-man since we saw you last;—you must try your hand at edge and point, Master Albert. Marry, after this thou mayst wear thy toledo with an air, cock thy beaver, and draw at a word, like a pretty fellow of the rapier. Give us a hand, good Albert,—I thank thee for the service thou hast done in lowering the plume of that saucy sea-urchin. Why didst not run him through the body?"

The Secretary was not prepared for this bluff questioning, and as he took the Collector's hand, his cheek reddened and he replied with a modest mein, "I sought no quarrel with the Skipper and am thankful that we parted with so little hurt."

Notwithstanding the complacency with which Albert regarded his recent conduct, and the gaiety of heart with which he now visited the Rose Croft; and despite his resolution to assume a bolder carriage in the presence of Blanche, his bearing at this moment was characterized by more than ordinary diffidence and show of respect. It was even with some

confusion that he now approached the maiden and offered her his hand; and, what was equally to be remarked, Blanche Warden, on her part, seemed to have lost that confiding and unguarded tone of intimacy with which she was ever in the habit of receiving the Secretary. Still, joy sparkled in her eye and warmed her features with a genial flush, as she noted Albert's humbleness in her presence, and read in it his more profound sense of the value of her favour.

"Our birth-day feast," he said, after saluting the maiden, "will be well remembered in the province for the general content it has given. All voices are praising Mistress Blanche: and she has won many sincere wishes from the townspeople for long and happy life."

"Alas!" replied the maiden, "whatever others may think, I have wept sorely for that unlucky feast. I did not wish it at first, and, in the end, had better reason to grieve that I had been persuaded to make it."

"Master Verheyden," interposed the Collector, "thou hast come most seasonably hither: this girl must have me consent to trail my old limbs after her, like a young gallant, this morning, in a ramble to enjoy the air, as she calls it—simply because she hath happened to leave her nest with the merry chirp of a spring lark. Thou shalt take my place as a fitter man for such service. There, Blanche, is the Secretary for thee—a better squire of thy body than thy old rusty-jointed father! I have a more profitable calling on hand to visit my fields. Ha, Mas-

ter Albert, you wear a love token on your breast!" added the old gentleman, with a playful smile, as he took in his hand a small miniature set in gold, which hung by a chain from the Secretary's neck, and had accidentally escaped unobserved from beneath his vest in the action of dismounting from his horse; "some lady of the other side of the water, eh? And on the back, here, letters which my eyes are too old to make out without my glasses—a posy, no doubt: 'Let fools great Cupid's yoke disdain—' thou know'st the song, Master; 'tis the way of all living."

"'Tis my poor mother's likeness," said Albert, gravely, at the same time restoring the miniature to his bosom. "She put it round my neck with her own hands whilst she lay upon her death-bed: and I have worn it ever since. 'Tis the only remembrance I have of her. I was a child when she died, but not too young to feel the loss of one who loved me so well."

The tear started into the Secretary's eye as he spoke, and when Mr. Warden saw it, a tear also came into his, which he brushed away with his hand, saying, with an assumed vivacity, "Pardon, good lad! a thousand times I ask your forgiveness for my rude speech. I did not think of what I said; and I but love thee the more for thy kind memory of thy mother. Hang up care by his wing! the world is overstocked with it. You will stay dinner with us, good master? I go forth to look after some necessary affairs, and will be back before this girl has led you her dance. At dinner I will have much to say

to you concerning that tarpaulin bully. A plague on the wool cap! I could have found it in my heart to fight with him myself:—my gray hairs against his raven locks! Do you know, Master Verheyden, he was fain to ask my leave to woo our girl here—this Blanche of mine? See, how the wench hoists her red ensign on the cheek at the thought of it:—ay, and pressed it on me so rudely, and with such clap-me-on-the-back familiarity, as he would have used to cozen Mistress Dorothy of the Crow and Archer out of a jack of ale. Thou should'st have spitted him on thy sword, for a public benefaction, and had the thanks of the Mayor and Aldermen for thy good works. I would as lief see him so trussed as the haunch of a brocket in my own kitchen."

"Nay, my dear father," interrupted Blanche, as she saw a storm rising on the Collector's brow, "pray you say no more about the Skipper. Master Albert doth not like to be tasked with discourse of his quarrel; and besides, the Skipper—"

"Hath had his belly full, I warrant thou would'st say, girl. Well, well, I will order my horse, and away; so go your own road. Farewell, Master Albert, until I see you again at dinner."

The Secretary and the maiden now set forth upon their walk, and directed their steps along the upper margin of the bank which overhung the river, until they were soon shaded in the forest that grew thickly upon the steep slope by which the plain descended to the beach. Out of this bank, at frequent intervals, gushed forth pure springs of water, that found their way to the river through beds of matted grass and

leaves. A light sunny haze mantled the whole landscape of forest, field, and river, and threw a warm and rich tint over the perspective. The grass was still green as in spring; but the woods glittered, as the light breeze shook their bright and many-coloured foliage, which autumn had flung like a harlequin-garb over every spray. The scene, at all times pre-eminent for its beauty, was now fraught with its greatest attraction for the eye: and the genial temperature of the season—that delightful period when the first frosts vanish at the touch of the sun—still enhanced the pleasure which the spectator felt in wandering over the landscape.

"Heaven hath garnished out no fairer land than this," said the Secretary, as at length, after pursuing a path that wound through this wilderness,—sometimes descending to the pebbly beach and again rising to the level of the plain above—Blanche had seated herself upon the trunk of a fallen tree, in a position from which the whole extent of the river, the fort, and the upper headland, with the Town House, were visible; "nor is there a nook upon this wide globe which I would more contentedly make my home."

"It will ever be your home, Master Albert," was the maiden's reply; "for they who come hither from the old world seldom think of going back. You can find no reason to return."

"My fortunes are guided by our good Lord," returned the Secretary, "and even now he sometimes speaks of going hence again to England. With my own free will, methinks, I should never leave this

sunny land. These woods are richer to my eye than pent-up cities; these spreading oaks and stately poplars, than our groined and shafted cathedrals and our cloistered aisles: yes, and I more love to think of the free range of this woodland life, these forest-fed deer, and flight of flocking wild fowl, than all the busy assembling of careful men which throng the great marts of trade."

"Surely his Lordship would not take you hence against your will," said Blanche, thoughtfully. "Indeed we could not,"—she continued, and then suddenly checking herself, as if upon some self-reproof for speaking more freely than was proper, added, "his Lordship will not leave the province again,—or if he does—"

"I am but an humble Secretary of his Lordship," interrupted Albert, "and needs must follow as he shall command."

"He *will* not command it, Master Albert. Our dear Lady Maria loves you well, as I have heard her say, and will persuade his Lordship to command you stay."

"I need not his command," replied the Secretary; "it would be enough for me I was not constrained to go hence; your wish, Mistress Blanche,—nay, your permission would keep me here, even if my inclination tended back again to the old world."

"My wish, Master Albert! how could I have other wish but that thou should'st stay?" inquired the maiden, in all singleness of heart. "Do we not sing and play together; ride, sail, hawk, and hunt together? Have you not promised to render that history

of the good Chevalier into English for me? Am I not to be skilled in the French tongue, under your teaching? Oh, how could I wish other than that you stay with us, Master Albert!"

"Come what hazards may," said the Secretary, with deep emotion, as he took the maiden's hand, "I swear by this good day and by this beauteous world, that I will never leave thee."

But few words more passed—and these were of such an import as my reader may well conceive, from what has gone before—till Albert Verheyden kneeled at the maiden's feet and vowed unalterable devotion to her happiness, and rose a betrothed lover. With lingering steps and freer speech, Blanche hanging on Albert's arm, the plighted pair slowly returned to the Rose Croft.

CHAPTER VI.

I guess by all this quaint array
The burghers hold their sports to-day.

SCOTT.

THE day appointed for the prize-play was mild and clear; and as the anticipation of the sport had created a stir throughout the province, there was reason to expect a large attendance.

Stark Whittle had, within a year past, emigrated to the dominions of the Proprietary, from Jamaica, and by dint of trumpeting his own renown—an act for which the professors of his craft were somewhat distinguished—had obtained the repute of a skilful master of fence. Sergeant Travers had been several years in the province, and had already established his fame, in more than one trial, with such wandering professors of the Noble Science as, at that era, were to be found in every quarter of Christendom. Great expectations were therefore entertained of an encounter of rare interest to the men of the sword—a class which might be said to have comprehended not only the military men of the times, and such gentlemen

in civil life as were educated in the use of the weapon, but also that extensive circle of idlers, boasters, tavern-frequenters, and sport-loving gentry which have always passed under the denomination of choice spirits.

Under the direction of Colonel Talbot—the patron of all sports and pastimes in the province—a platform, or stage of deal boards, about twenty feet square and three feet above the ground, had been constructed, near the centre of the common in the rear of the Town House. A few paces from the platform stood a flag-staff, from which floated a forked pennon bearing the device of the provincial arms, ambitiously executed in oil by Master Bister, the artist of the city. On a skirt of the common, some six or eight tents marked the position of the Court of Guard, formed by the garrison of the fort, under the command of Nicholas Verbrack, the Lieutenant. Opposite to this encampment, a range of booths had been erected by the townspeople, where was displayed every variety of refreshment which the housekeeping stores of the proprietors might afford. These booths were distinguished by various devices in the way of signs; one presenting a banner hung out on a pole with a rude representation of a Cock in jack-boots and sword, with his neck stretched as in the act of crowing, and a label from his bill having written on it,

"STARK WHITTLE FOR EVER!"

whilst another manifested its partizanship for the ad-

verse champion, by the device of a bull in armour, reared on his hind legs, with the inscription,

"SERGEANT TRAVERS.
THE OLD SWORD AGAINST THE NEW BUCKLER."

Others were designated simply by a green bush, the old sign of good wine within. Amongst these temporary sheds was especially to be noted one which was surmounted by a towering staff bearing a flag embellished with the cross of St. Andrew, whose proprietor was sufficiently indicated by a flaring and, to say the truth, not very perspicuous portraiture of the Crow and Archer, from the pallet of Master Bister. Sundry legends, scrawled in charcoal over the front of the booth, expressed the utmost impartiality between the combatants and their several friends, as might be read in such as "Honour to the brave." "A fair field and no favours," and others of similar import equally guarded against the accident of denoting the party of the host. Within the shed the saucy face of our jolly dame Dorothy might have been seen, long before the appointed hour of the combat, as she busied herself in adjusting matters to meet the expected pressure of the day.

Such was the picture presented on the Town Common about noon. Already a large number of the inland inhabitants had arrived, and troops of new comers were every moment seen halting their horses in the vicinity of the common: others were discerned as far off as the inequalities of the country allowed, journeying down from the distant highlands, or moving forward in disorderly squadrons across the plain

by every road which led to the town. The river presented a scene not less animated. Boats of various sizes, from a pinnace down to a canoe, were sprinkled over the whole expanse of water, ferrying across the inhabitants who resided beyond the St. Mary's river, as well as many from the opposite shore of the Potomac. The hostel of Master Weasel was thronged with guests, and every ale-house and ordinary of inferior note bore testimony to the attraction which the projected prize-play presented to the country people both far and near.

Meantime the combatants were not yet accessible to the sight of the inquisitive crowd. They were each in charge of their respective friends. Stark Whittle had selected Captain Coode as his patron, and was now lodged in the house of the burgess, where he was attended by a troop of those professional backers who are ever at hand on occasions of sport with their advice,—men who, whether imbued with skill or not, are still prone to take the credit of being well versed in the mysteries of the game. These were now busy, or affected to be so, in preparing their champion for his encounter, exhibiting all that show of science in the minutiæ of the craft, which belongs to their class. Under their direction, the swordsman had been, for several days, put under a diet which was alleged to be scrupulously regulated to produce the due quantum of strength without an increase of bulk; he had been breathed a certain number of hours each day in the exercise of his weapon; and now that the moment of trial was at hand, great exactness and care were displayed in

anointing his limbs with bear's grease, to give them their requisite suppleness. The same precautions, with the same pedantry, were bestowed upon Sergeant Travers, who, still shut up in the Fort, was undergoing the discipline of Captain Dauntrees and Arnold de la Grange,—both of these worthies claiming to be adepts in this important matter of training for a prize play.

About an half hour before four o'clock, the common was filled with the groups of spectators, leaving the town almost emptied of its inhabitants. These thronged around the booths, or strolled across the plain, or took their places at the platform. Nicholas Verbrack, at this moment, wheeled off his company from the Court of Guard, and, marching to the scene of the expected fight, formed them in two ranks, immediately behind the flag-staff, which might be said to represent the head of the lists. From this position he detached sentinels, armed with pikes, who were posted at intervals, in military fashion, around the platform, at the distance of some ten paces from it, beyond which limit the lookers-on were compelled to retire, leaving the intervening space entirely clear. The crowd which was thus thrust back, consisted indifferently of both sexes,—the women, as is always the case in public shows wherever they may gain admission, forming no inconsiderable portion of the mass, and they were now seen elbowing their way to the front of the throng, and sustaining their positions there, with as stout resolve as the sturdiest of their antagonists. Carts, wagons, tumbrels, and sundry nondescript conveyances, fabricated for the occa-

sion and laden to their utmost capacity with females, formed a kind of rear division surrounding the stage. Several gentlemen, among whom was the Proprietary, accompanied by his uncle Philip Calvert the Chancellor, nearly all the members of the Council, Master Anthony Warden, and others, were seen grouped together on horseback. Albert Verheyden with Benedict Leonard had come in the train of this party, but were now observed in various quarters of the field, as they rode around to amuse themselves with the spectacle. Chiseldine, the reverend Master Yeo, and some others conspicuous in the ranks of opposition to the Proprietary and his party, were seen frequently reining up their horses together in small squads, and as often dispersing, as if under some occasional suggestion against the propriety of their consorting too much together in public. Cockle-scraft, with Roche del Carmine and three or four men in sailors' dress,—the Skipper and his mate being both armed rather beyond what was usual,—strolled about the field, without ostensibly participating in the affairs of either party.

The scene presented a lively and striking spectacle. The musqueteers in their green livery, drawn up beneath the pennon that fluttered above the stage; the motley crowd of persons of both sexes that surrounded the platform, taxing all the vigilance of the sentinels to prevent them from pressing beyond their allotted boundary; the scarlet hoods and glittering head-gear, wimples, coifs, caps, and bright-coloured petticoats, mingled in the mass with the russet serge and round hat of the rustic, and with the gayer holi-

day-attire of belted burghers and bluff landholders arrayed in swords, short cloaks and plumed beavers; the troops of spectators that moved over the field on horseback, some with the sober steadiness of age, and others with the prankishness of young cavaliers anxious to display their horsemanship in the caracole, the demi-volte, the courbette, and the various other points of equestrian skill to which the jargon of that day supplied names; the bustle of strolling idlers that hovered about the booths, where the twangling of a fiddle in one quarter and the rattle of dice in another rose in a confused din upon the ear, mingled with the oaths of drinkers and the nimble-tongued and shrill tones of the authoritative dame of the Crow and Archer, as she chid or promoted the clamour around her:—all these images, grouped together on the beautiful plain of St. Mary's, with that transparent blue heaven above, and the matchless foliage of the Fall giving to the forest the hues of the dying dolphin, and the mild, invigorating coolness of that incomparable season which ushers in the gradual march of winter, diffusing health and buoyancy into every frame,—afforded a picture which was calculated to inspire a high sense of enjoyment in those who witnessed it, and which would scarcely fail to produce something of the same impression if skilfully delineated on the canvass.

At a signal from Colonel Talbot, a trumpeter bearing an instrument which, like himself, was covered with ribands, mounted upon the stage and blew forth a sprightly summons. When this was repeated thrice, two small parties were seen entering on the common

from different quarters. That which came from the direction of the centre of the town, was immediately descried as Stark Whittle and his party, consisting of Captain Coode with three or four attendants. The champion was wrapped in a horseman's cassock that concealed his figure from observation, whilst beside him walked his second, a squat, brawny, fierce little man, with a huge red nose, a squint in one eye, a scar across his brow, and a large broad-flapped beaver garnished with a black ostrich feather which hung backward a span below his shoulder. This worthy enjoyed the designation of Ensign Tick, being a decayed officer of Lord Cecil's time, and still retaining his title, though reduced to a sharking livelihood in a civil station. He was, like his principal, shrouded in a cloak: in one hand he bore a pair of swords, and in the other a small creel or basket containing a bottle of usquebaugh and sundry commodities used for the speedy staunching of a wound,—furniture familiar to the backers of heroes in such circumstances as those of his principal at the present moment. The other group came from the quarter of the Town House, by the road that led up from the Crow and Archer, where they had betaken themselves to await the summons: it was composed of Travers attended by Captain Dauntrees, and his second, the Sergeant-Major of the musqueteers, bearing the name of Master Stocket,—one or two privates of the same corps, and a cortege of bare-headed and bare-legged boys, that stepped forth at the full compass of their stride, to keep pace with the rapid movement of the principals of the party.

As soon as these adverse bands came within the range of the crowd, lanes were opened for their admission, and the two champions, advancing to an open space before the guard of soldiers, there threw aside their cloaks and sprang upon the stage. They were instantly followed by their seconds, whilst a flourish of the trumpet and a long ruffle from the drums and fifes of the musqueteers announced that the ceremonies of the fight were about to commence.

The champions were both men of fine shape and sinew, nearly equal in height and bulk, and both came to their engagement with apparently composed and cheerful countenances. The only face of wrath and fire correspondent to the valorous prowess which had impelled this warlike meeting, was that of Ensign Tick. He alone seemed to be duly impressed with the resentment which a belligerent should indulge in such a strife. Sergeant-Major Stocket retained a practised calmness that was altogether professional, and performed his duty on the stage with exemplary gravity. The champions were dressed in military costume; Travers in that of his corps, Whittle in the cumbrous scarlet coat of the English uniform. Both wore the heavy wide-legged boot, which, immediately after mounting the stage, they exchanged for pumps. As soon as this was done, they were severally disrobed of their coats, and thus presented for the combat in their shirt sleeves. A fillet of red riband was tied around the right arm of the challenger above the elbow, whilst one of green was similarly adjusted on the arm of Travers. During the arranging of these preliminaries, Dauntrees and Coode

had ascended the platform, that they might, as patrons of the parties, bear testimony to the due observance of the established laws of the play. When all was done, and the combatants were announced to be ready for the encounter, Coode retired from the stage and took a post at that end of the platform most remote from the flag-staff, whilst Dauntrees marched with military precision to a post in front of his company, where taking a halberd from a sergeant who held it ready for him, he planted himself, erect and stately, immediately at the head of his men. The seconds now advanced, each bearing in his hand a pair of back-swords of moderate length, and each selecting one for his principal, these were measured in public to show,—what had indeed been previously adjusted by private regulation,—that no advantage was possessed by either side in the length of weapon, and after this ceremony they were placed in the hands of those who were to use them. The seconds then retired to opposite points on the platform, whilst the champions themselves, with a praiseworthy courtesy and some expressions of good will, shook hands; after which, with a flourish of swords and a gay alacrity of manner, they wheeled round and took the stations allotted to them by their seconds.

All this time the utmost silence pervaded the crowd of spectators. Every one had pressed towards the stage at the summons of the trumpet: the booths were deserted, or left with but a solitary watchman: a sentinel, here and there, in the verge of the little encampment on the skirt of the common, was the only moving thing that was not crowded up

to the scene of conflict. The Proprietary and his friends had a post of honour assigned to them in the rear of Dauntrees' soldiers, whence they might minutely observe all that was going on. Chiseldine and his party occupied a post at the opposite end of the stage, relatively the same as that of the Proprietary; but, as no space was kept clear for their accommodation, they were forced somewhat in the rear of the crowd of spectators on foot, and a close observer might have seen in their thoughtful countenances that other subjects besides the trivial amusements of the hour occupied their minds.

The champions now took their attitudes of attack and defence, and forthwith engaged with great vigour. Blows were made and parried with masterly address. A quick onset, the assailant pressing his antagonist across the full length of the stage, was returned with an assault not less prompt, and the weapons were wielded with a dexterity and sleight that almost defied the eye to follow the several strokes and their counter defences. Nothing was heard but the clank of steel and the sullen stamp of the combatants on the boards of the platform, as they gave and received blows; but, as yet, neither party had gained advantage; and the seconds, deeming that the first bout was played long enough, interposed to give their principals time to breathe.

Whilst the combatants, in this interval, were refreshing themselves under the care of their seconds, the busy murmur of conversation amongst the crowd announced the interest which the play inspired. Many tokens of active partisanship began to manifest them-

selves, and it was obvious, from the emphasis with which the commendations were bestowed upon the new champion Whittle, that he was a decided favourite of, at least, one party on the field,—a party composed exclusively of Protestants; whilst those of the Catholic faith were no less energetic in their advocacy of Travers. It had already grown to be a sectarian division of feeling, founded on the well-known religious professions of the two champions; and as the Protestants were the most numerous on the ground, it may be affirmed that Stark Whittle enlisted the larger share of popular admiration. John Coode was not backward to foment the party spirit, which had thus unfortunately begun to be developed, by such artifices as he well knew how to practise.

"Stark battles with the Papist as old Luther battled with the Devil," he said exultingly to a group of inland proprietors who were casually discussing the expected issue of the fight; "we shall see this cub of Papacy disciplined with a wholesome Protestant purgation presently."

The din of voices was suddenly stilled by the notes of the trumpet, announcing the renewal of the fight. The parties again took their posts; and again the clash of swords was heard, falling thickly upon the ear. All was suspense and silence, except that now, as a casual advantage was gained by one or other of the combatants, notes of applause and exhortation rose in half-stifled tones from the friends of either side, or ejaculations of fear from their opponents,—these proceeding most frequently from the females. This passage, however, suddenly terminated by a

stroke from Whittle's sword, the point of which just severed the skin upon Travers' brow. The appearance of blood was a signal to drop their points, and thus the combatants were afforded a second breathing spell. The wound of Sergeant Travers was no sooner perceived than the whole party who had taken such interest in his adversary's success, raised a shout of exultation that rent the air. This manifestation of triumph, rousing the partisans of the opposite champion into a tone of feeling that partook of defiance, they returned the acclamation with no less vehemence, taking the word from Talbot as he galloped round the confines of the crowd—"Success to Gilbert Travers, a tried master of the Noble Science!"

In this temper of the bystanders, the third passage was announced. Again the combatants engaged, with more than their former vehemence,—for, taking the hue of their respective adherents, they were wrought up into a state of ardent hostility, which showed itself in the acerbity and vigour of their blows. The spectators were sensibly impelled, as the struggle waxed fiercer, into more intense and angry maintenance of their champions, and all other thoughts seemed now to be absorbed in the desire of victory. Unlike the former passages, this was accompanied with all the clamour of incensed rivalry. At no instant were the voices of partisans lulled into silence. "Bravo, good Stark!—Well played, Gilbert!" "Huzza, excellent! By Saint Dunstan, nobly parried, Sergeant!"—and similar expressions of encou-

ragement, burst forth from the lips of the excited groups, as they involuntarily laid their hands upon their swords, and, breaking through all constraint, passed up to the frame of the platform. In the height of this animating impulse, Travers threw aside a blow which had been directed with great energy at his breast, and the vigour with which he parried it swayed the sword of his adversary so far out of his sphere of defence, as to leave his body open to the return stroke, which was plied with such effect as to make a deep incision midway down Whittle's thigh and thence across the knee, laying open the flesh, through that whole track, to the bone, and covering the wounded man with his blood. It was observed that Whittle's previous stroke had been thrown with such violence as to cause him to reel from his footing when the force of the blow was dashed aside into the air, and many were of opinion that this slip of the foot was an accident which should have saved him from the return cut that was made with such disabling effect. It was instantly apparent that this hit decided the fight and gave the victory to the Sergeant of the Musquetcers.

"A Roland for an Oliver!" exclaimed Talbot with wild exultation. "Admirable, Sergeant!—well done!—you have shorn the spur of that cock for a while, at least."

"Huzza for Travers!" resounded over the field from the voices of the large party of his friends; whilst, on the other side, with equal vehemence, was shouted, "Foul play! Shame, shame! A d—d Papistical, cowardly trick!"

"I'll meet thee, for a beggarly foister," cried an incensed partisan, who sprang upon the platform and shook his sword in Travers' face—"I'll meet thee, Master Toasting-iron, when you dare!—I'll give thee a lesson for striking a man below the knee."

"Push it at him now, Master Hardthrust," exclaimed a second, following in the steps of the new challenger; "he deserves no better than to be put on his defence where he stands—for a filthy Roman as he is. A foul cut below the knee, and at a man who had lost his footing! That is the upshot of his valour!"

These invaders of the platform were instantly confronted by two or three of the opposite party who ascended the stage to drag them off;—and, in turn, some dozens of either complexion in the quarrel sprang to the aid of their respective friends—thus presenting on both sides a compact body of excited opponents fiercely bent on mischief.

Talbot was instantly off his horse, and, sword in hand, rushed to the scene of broil, calling upon Dauntrees to advance his men and make a clear stage. Swords were drawn in all quarters, and the first person with whom Talbot came in conflict was John Coode, who, with his naked weapon in his hand, was stimulating his partisans to commence an assault. Talbot seized him by the front of his coat, and presenting the point of his sword to his breast, cried out—"Swiller of the leavings of a tap room! by my hand, if thou openest thy rotten throat with

but a cough, I will thrust my sword ell deep into thy worthless body. Begone, hound!"

And with this word he pushed the burgess violently over the edge of the platform on the brink of which he stood. In a moment the musqueteers were marched by Dauntrees, in solid mass, upon the stage, and the threatened rioters were thus expelled from the seat of contest. Holding this position, the troops had the command of the field, and by threatening to fire, which Dauntrees, with the trained coolness of an old soldier, announced, in a stentorian voice, he would certainly do if further violence were menaced, Chiseldine, Coode and their companions, amongst whom was Parson Yeo, interfered to quiet the tumult and draw off their adherents. During all this commotion, Corporal Abbot was seen on the outer skirt of the crowd, brandishing his weapon, and hurrying to and fro with a look which had wrath enough in it to annihilate the whole Church of Rome, yet mixed up with a discretion which would have left a casual spectator at a loss to determine exactly on what side he was arrayed. "Odso!" he ejaculated; "let me into that skirmish! I will teach them orderly behaviour,—the varlets! Shall we have brawls put upon us? Shall we digest cold iron against our will? No, by my belt—not whilst my name is Abbot! The fight will be this way anon—and, I warrant you, my hand is in it."

"Put up thy sword, thou venturesome fool," exclaimed Verbrack, who in hurrying round the confines of the crowd with a small party of the musqueteers, encountered the man of war in the height of

his ire—"put up thy sword—nor stand vapouring here like a grain thrasher!"—which exhortation the Lieutenant accompanied with a slight blow across the offender's shoulders, laid on with the flat of his sword.

"Ha, ha! venturesome, you may find me, truly, Master Lieutenant; but, as thou say'st, it is a good example to put up our weapons when headstrong men might be led off by evil examples;" with which sage reflection the wrath of the Corporal suddenly surceased, and his weapon was immediately consigned to its sheath, whence it was not abstracted for full five seconds after the Lieutenant had disappeared.

Godfrey had, at the first symptom of confusion, retired from the field, and Cocklescraft, with his seamen, stood by an unconcerned spectator of the whole scene—nor passed a word with any one, except that at one moment, when stalking around the platform the halberd of Dauntrees accidently, and without the observation of the Captain, was protruded across his path. The Skipper disdaining to walk out of the way of this impediment, drew his sword and struck it down, saying fiercely as he did it,—

"Find other service for your pike, than to stop my wandering."

"By my troth, saucy master," replied Dauntrees, "but I will speedily find service for my pike that shall teach thee more civil behaviour. But pass on, sir, you have a license in the Port to go free of all notice except such as shall give thee accommodation in the stocks."

Lord Baltimore, with the graver gentlemen of his

suite, rode around the scene of disorder manifesting the utmost concern, and exhorting all whom he might address with any hope of persuasion, to retire quietly from the field. The old Collector, however, was not the most docile of his adherents; for the veteran's blood had risen to fever heat, and he repeatedly charged the rioters, cane in hand, with strenuous reproof of their misconduct, expressed in no very dainty terms. By degrees the authors of these tumults began to withdraw from the scene of action and to form themselves into detached bodies far apart, where their rage was allowed to spend itself in unchallenged vituperation and rebuke of their antagonists, and finally to subside, at least, into a manageable degree of resentment.

CHAPTER VII.

Nor less upon the saddened town
The evening sunk in sorrow down.
The burghers spoke of civil jar,
Of rumour'd feuds and mountain war.

SCOTT.

In this state of excitement and exasperation, the early twilight found the greater number of the spectators of the recent show, and crowds still lingered in detached and angry parties about the common, even until the new moon began to shed a pale light over the field. The Council, whose suspicions of the disaffected had, for some time past, put them on the strictest observation of Coode and his friends, had now seen enough in the conduct of that party to convince them that the spirit of rebellion was sufficiently bold to manifest itself, on the first occasion, in some decided and dangerous attempt upon the peace of the province. They therefore determined to lose no time in the adoption of such proceedings as should enable them to act most effectually against the ringleaders. With this view, Colonel Darnall was directed by the Proprietary to take measures to obtain accurate in-

formation of the movements of Coode and his party. He accordingly repaired to the Fort to Dauntrees, who, after duly weighing the delicate nature of the commission, determined to take the matter in his own hand, and promised to report to the Council before midnight. This being approved by Darnall, the Captain, after he had taken his supper, threw aside his military dress and equipped himself in that of a burgher or private citizen of the Port; and wrapping himself in a cloak, set forward about nine o'clock on his adventures. His first attention was given to John Coode, and he consequently bent his steps towards the dwelling of the burgess. The house stood retired from a street or shaded lane, in a position somewhat remote from immediate neighbours, whilst a thick bower of foliage threw the mass of building at this hour of midnight into deep obscurity. The Captain approached as near to the premises as he might do with safety, and, under the shelter of the shrubbery, found himself in a post where he might observe, without much risk of detection, at least such persons as approached or left the house. He had no difficulty very soon to convince himself that the dwelling was crowded with visiters. This was manifest not only from the figures that were seen passing and repassing the few dim lights that flickered from the casements, but from the constant ingress and egress of persons by the outer gate, the path to which led immediately past the Captain's place of concealment. Many of the passers he could observe to be persons from the inland settlements. After a brief lapse of time came Parson Yeo, moving from the house to

the gate, and, at intervals, following him, Kenelm Chiseldine, Godfrey, and several individuals known to be prominent in promoting the late quarrel between the Burgesses and the Proprietary. The few words that dropped from the visiters of the dwelling house, as they moved within the range of the Captain's hearing, related to the Fendalls, and he more than once heard Lieutenant Godfrey's name connected with them, in a manner that it greatly puzzled him to comprehend; for, as yet, Godfrey had altogether escaped the suspicion of the Proprietary's friends. When these had gone by, the redoubtable Corporal Abbot was the next that traversed the pathway. He was alone, and walked with a brisk pace through the gate, after which he turned into the street in a direction opposite to that which the greater number of those who preceded him had taken. The Captain now boldly left his hiding-place and, with a free step, followed the lonely professor of war and the 'gentle craft,' and overtook him in a short space, when he was enabled to discern that the troubles of the day had led to some excess in the little martialist's potations, by which his walk was rendered slightly unsteady. The Captain, confiding in his disguise, and the probable bewilderment of the tailor's brain, accosted him boldly as a fellow-conspirator.

"Zounds, neighbour! you are in haste to get under cover to-night. I have striven like a goaded horse to overtake you, all the way from the door of Master Coode's. Wherefore so fast?"

"It is n't wise to be seen so near Master Coode's.

The Proprietary hath already an evil eye upon him, and notes his associates."

"Truly, then it is discreet to make speed away from the dwelling—though it be, after all, but a sneaking thing to fear the Proprietary. We are enough to master his bullies, to my thinking."

"Enough! troth, are we. There is Lieutenant Godfrey, as you might have heard him say, has sixty men —a score of them to come across the Potomac—ready to ride into the town any night he may wink his eye; besides the friends we have in swarms as thick as pigeon-flights 'twixt this and Christina. Enough, truly!—enough and to spare, Master—— Your pardon, I have forgot your name?"

"Whitebread," replied Dauntrees.

"Oh, surely! How addled is my pate! Master Whitebread, we shall do it," said the Corporal, with an utterance that might just be discerned to trip a little on the tongue, for his excesses had not so much disturbed as quickened his speech and left him more communicative than in his present circumstances was altogether safe. "We shall do it, Master Whitebread, on the night of the fifth of November, as the reverend Master Yeo has appointed."

"Guy Fawkes's night," said Dauntrees. "But the Fendalls——"

"The Lord love you, Master Wheatbread! thou couldst not have rightly apprehended Captain Coode. Lieutenant Godfrey is to bring his troopers—I am one of them, and counted on: I wear his Lordship's colours and take his pay, though I be not of his cause, mark you—Lieutenant Godfrey is to fetch his minute-

men on Wednesday come next sennight, and make an onslaught upon the prison. We begin with that."

"Ay, so I take it, valiant Master Corporal. Captain Coode so laid it down."

"Faith did he; and he looks to see it done to the last scruple, which, I promise you, it shall be, if there be virtue in steel!"

"But he did not explain how these friends from Virginia should reach our shore."

"Thou wert asleep, Master Sweetbread: thou wert dull. Did you not know that Master Cockles-craft hath quarreled with the Proprietary, and brings us his brigantine? Truly, does he! When knaves fall out, honest men come by their own, ha, ha! By cock and pye,—but that's a true word!"

"Now, good night, brave Corporal," said Dauntrees, as soon as he came to a convenient point to free himself of the company of the flustered and leaky hatcher of treasons. "Good night, and mayst thou be soon rewarded for thy deserts."

"Good night, Master Sweetbread—and thank you heartily for your kind wishes—I warrant you I get my deserts. But remember," the tailor added, laying his hand upon his lips; "mute as a mattock—not a breath!" Having given this parting admonition, he pursued his way with a confident carriage; and very soon after they parted, Dauntrees heard his voice lifted up into a brisk song.

"Well," said the Captain, when he was left alone; "for the sneaking trade of an eaves-dropper, I have a most apt and commendable talent. In this, my first traffic in so noble and praise-worthy an employ-

ment, have I succeeded to a marvel. Scarce an hour since my fertile genius struck out this point of war, and here have I unravelled a whole web of treason, that shall go nigh to hanging up these curs by the score. All's fair in war, they say:—but, by my faith, I had rather have won my knowledge by some little show of buckler-work, even if it were but a show. It would have been more soldierly. Yet, as bluff Harry's leather gun in the Tower has it,—'Non marte opus est cui non deficit Mercurius.' We win by art when steel may not be struck."

The Captain now took a road that led back towards the common, where he carefully reconnoitered the whole ground. Some few persons yet loitered in the vicinity of the booths, and two or three small bands of men, muffled in cloaks, were seen in close conference amongst the cedars that formed a thicket near the Town House. From this point, looking across the narrow bottom of low and marshy ground which lay between the town and the homestead of Chiseldine, which was in full view wherever an opening between the trees gave a range to the eye, he could discover that the dwelling house was more than usually lighted, and that visiters were, at this late hour, thronging the apartments.

Whilst he was busy with these observations, Lieutenant Godfrey and Cocklescraft emerged from the cedars, in earnest discourse, and slowly followed the path which led down the bank to Master Weasel's inn. Without giving himself the trouble to listen, he could not help hearing the short colloquy which passed between them before they entered the hostel.

"What would you have with a horse at this hour of the night?" inquired the Lieutenant.

"It is but a freak," replied the Skipper. "By St. Iago, Lieutenant, I will deal roundly with him. In honour, I will admonish him before hand. He shall have warning, on my conscience—warning that it shall make him pale to read."

"I will not baulk thy devilment, Dick Cocklescraft: So, thou shalt have the steed. When wilt thou return?"

"By as early a minute after midnight as I may ride the space with such speed as thy beast by spurring may afford."

"Ha, ha! a sailor o' horseback and the devil rides at his crupper! Ho, Filch, there—ostler Filch! Hither, man: see that an hour hence, when Master Cocklescraft hath finished his supper, thou saddle my nag and fetch him—where, Master Skipper?"

"To the Town House steps," said his companion.

"To the Town House steps—dost thou hear?"

Dauntrees having now gathered all the information which his good fortune through his night's adventure had thrown in his way, betook himself, with all haste to the Proprietary mansion. Here he found Lord Baltimore, Talbot, Darnall and others awaiting his arrival. He narrated circumstantially the strange and ample details connected with the plots in concoction and their contrivers, as he had learned t' em; and laid a tissue of facts before the Council which left no room for hesitation as to the judgment to be formed of the shape and pressure of

the rebellion. Having thus executed the commission confided to him, he retired to his quarters.

On the following morning, soon after the town was emptied of the press of visiters who had crowded in to the prize play, the greater portion of whom had taken their departure at an early hour, it is sufficient for me only to inform my reader, that John Coode, Lieutenant Godfrey, and Corporal Abbot, with a half score of others less distinguished in this history, were snugly ensconced in gaol, sharing the apartment of the persecuted patriots Josias and Samuel Fendall. How they came into this stronghold, and what consternation this decisive act of vigorous administration spread through the town; who advised the measure and who executed it, I leave to the conjecture of the imaginative friend who has accompanied me through the dry narrative of these pages.

For the present, neither Kenelm Chiseldine nor the reverend Parson Yeo, were molested, though it may be conceived that they did not pass free of that close observation of their outgoings and incomings with which, in all countries, suspected persons are wont to be favoured by the guardians of the authority of government.

CHAPTER VIII.

The baffled factions in their houses skulk.

JOHN WOODVIL.

WHEN day broke upon the drowsy burghers of St. Mary's, on the morning after the prize play, the Olive Branch was no longer to be seen in the river. Such a sudden departure of so important a portion of the commercial marine of the port, produced no small degree of speculation amongst the waking citizens as, by degrees, after sunrise, they began to rub their eyes and look abroad. This speculation became still more intense when, in a few hours, they saw files of soldiers passing through the town, and heard, immediately afterwards, the rumour of the arrest of Coode and his compatriots. Still more was it excited by a report which was early brought to town from the Rose Croft, that the broad arrow—the mysterious presignification of mischief, a mark by which a suspected person was proscribed, or a devoted one forewarned—had been found deeply scratched, as with the point of a dagger, on the Collector's door. An unusual stir and buzz of murmured wonder prevailed through the little city, and every body was on foot to learn the cause of these phenomena. By

some it was said that the Skipper had gone on a trading excursion up the bay to Kent Island, as it was his custom to do. Those in the secret of the last night's conspiracy had no difficulty in ascribing his departure to movements connected with the plot: the broad arrow on the Collector's door was easily accounted for by such as were aware of Cockles-craft's midnight ride on Godfrey's horse; and, on all sides, expectation was raised into silent dread of some eruption that was to break forth, in a moment when none might be aware of it, and from a quarter to which few might look.

The Council was convened at the Proprietary mansion, and there the emergency was gravely debated and the most energetic measures of precaution and defence adopted. The escape of Cocklescraft, connected with his recent quarrel with the Secretary, and the disclosure made by Abbot of his concurrence in the plot of the conspirators, left no doubt of his treachery. The outbreak was rendered more formidable by its coincidence in point of time with the contemplated incursion of the Northern Indians, as related by the travelling doctor—a circumstance that seemed to infer correspondence between the leaders of the conspiracy and the savages, and to give the plot a consistency well calculated to excite alarm. To these topics of apprehension, on the part of the Council, was added a certain undefined and anxious misgiving that the goblin stories of the Wizard's Chapel, as reported by Dauntrees and Arnold de la Grange, and now repeated by the Proprietary with all the testimony he had obtained to support them,

had some connexion with this long-hatched rebellion, and that there were secret ramifications of the plot that had never yet been suspected. The participation of Godfrey and Cocklescraft in the designs of Coode, of which none of the Proprietary's friends had entertained a surmise until the previous night, was a fact adapted to confirm their fears of the wide diffusion of disaffection where it had not been looked for. The result of this deliberation was a resolve to pursue matters to a speedy conclusion by a decisive and bold action. The ringleaders were to be brought instantly to trial; the military force was to be increased; their ranks purged of all who were suspected to want heartiness in the cause; and every precaution was to be taken to provide against assault from all quarters, by night or day. Captain Dauntrees was commanded to look to the safety of the town, and to endeavour to ascertain what had become of Cocklescraft.

In this state of preparation and suspense, twenty-four hours past over without tidings of the Skipper, or any new developments of the designs of the conspirators. The vigorous measures taken by the Proprietary seemed to have struck terror into his adversaries, and at least driven them into the shelter of silence and concealment. At the end of this period Willy of the Flats,—who was one of those expert politicians who make it a point to manifest their patriotism by the most eager zeal in favour of the side that is uppermost,—having until the overthrow of Coode been strongly inclined to take part with the agitators, now made his way, about ten

o'clock at night, into the Fort, and thence to the presence of Captain Dauntrees. Approaching the Captain, with an air of constrained self-importance, he said in a half whisper,—

"News, Master Captain—grave news, worshipful sir,—state matters! I have come post-haste to tell you, that twenty minutes ago—no, that I may not lie, I will say twenty-five minutes ago—just so long as with good speed—a dog trot we will say—it might suffice for me to come hither from Master Weasel's tap-room—who think you I saw, and what did he do?"

"Speak, varlet, without this windy prologue."

"There comes me in Master Cocklescraft, and straight orders a noggin of brandy,—whereof guzzling it down with a most treasonable haste, he wiped his lips, and asked for Lieutenant Godfrey; and when he heard that the Lieutenant was in prison, he bit his lip and gave a kind of ha! or I might say grunt, and walked very suspiciously away."

"And thou hadst not the wit to follow him?"

"Follow him, Master Dauntrees, I did, as far as the cedars of the Town House, where—the moon being down—I lost him. He might have been on his way to the gaol, but I staid not to seek that out, for turning round,—now, said I, Willy, make for the Fort as fast as you can, and tell the Captain the whole matter."

"Thanks, at least, for that diligence of thine. Thou shalt have thy supper and a stoop of liquor for this."

"Blessings on thy worship, for thinking of the need

of an empty man!" said Willy, as with his hat tucked under his arm he went towards the Captain's kitchen to acquaint Matchcote with his master's hint touching the refreshment.

Dauntrees lost no time in despatching an inferior officer, with two or three files, in quest of the Skipper. These returned after midnight with a tale confirming Willy's narrative; but with the further intelligence that no traces could be obtained of Cocklescraft beyond his appearance at the Crow and Archer.

The next day the Superior of the Jesuit House of St. Inigoe's visited the Proprietary to inform him that, at the dawn, the servants of his establishment had found their skiff hauled up on the beach, some fifty or a hundred yards remote from the wharf where, on the preceding night, it had been carefully locked by a chain, which, it appeared, had been broken, showing that the boat had been used by some person of whom no knowledge could yet be obtained. He further stated that Fluke the fisherman, who lived some distance below St. Inigoe's, on the river bank, had that morning reported, that before daylight his dogs had waked him with loud barking, and that he had heard the footsteps of a man upon the beach: that the fisherman had challenged the stranger from his window, but had got no reply, and was fain to let him pass on without molestation, owing to the darkness of the hour.

This intelligence, combined with that brought to the fort by the fiddler, strongly pointed to the visit and retreat of the Skipper, and seemed to indicate

that he was lurking somewhere near the mouth of the river, and had, in the night, crossed St. Inigoe's creek immediately from the wharf of the Jesuit House to that of the Rose Croft, by which road he had visited the town and returned again before daylight.

Dauntrees, upon receiving this information, lost no time in visiting the House of St. Inigoe's, to inquire into the particulars; after which he went to see the fisherman. The result of this journey was to confirm him in the impression of the secret correspondence of the Skipper with the town, and to engage Fluke in the service of watching the future motions of the same visitant.

Simon Fluke lived some two or three miles below St. Inigoe's, near the mouth of the river, where a small cabin gave shelter to his wife and a troop of children—an amphibious brood of urchins who seemed to be at home either on land or water, and whose rude habits of life had inured them to the scant accommodation and precarious protection of the hut into which they were all huddled. This man earned a hard livelihood by supplying his neighbours of St. Inigoe's and the townspeople with fish; and it was greatly to his content that he now found himself engaged in the service of the Proprietary, with the promise of a handsome reward if his good fortune should enable him to aid effectually in securing the person of the Skipper.

It was a few days after his employment in this service, that the sun was seen to set amongst thickly scudding clouds and blasts of wind, such as, with the

near approach of November, are apt suddenly to break in upon the serene autumn, giving rude foretastes of winter. The horizon was dark, and the overmastered sun hopelessly struggled to fling a parting beam upon the ruffled waters.

The fisherman had hauled his boat upon the sand, bestowed his nets and other tackle in safety for the night, and taken his seat at his fireside, with a lighted pipe, where he challenged the besmirched, white-haired boy that toddled across the room—the youngest of his troop—to a game of romps, or more demurely chatted of household cares with his meagre and sad-visaged dame. The door of his hut standing wide open and looking southwardly, showed him the Potomac, even across to that remote cape called by the early settlers after St. Gregory, but now known as Smith's Point.

"Look out, dame," said the fisherman, as he cast his eye over this extensive sheet of water, yet illumined with the light of parting day, "and you shall see a strange craft beating up from the Virginia shore; she is almost too light a skiff for such a sea as that now running in. Hast seen it go down the river to-day? Where can it belong?"

"It is a new sight to me," replied the wife; "I saw nothing like it go down from St. Mary's to-day."

"He does not shape his course, either, up the river, so much as he makes for this shore," added the fisherman. "He comes from some harbour on the other side, short of St. Gregory. His business must drive him hard, to bring him out at this hour, in the teeth of such a wind. I will keep an eye on that fellow,

wife; there is enough in his venturing, to raise a suspicion."

The homely supper of the family, soon after this, called off the fisherman from his watch, which indeed the thickening shades of night soon rendered useless, and the only vigilance which the master of the hut could now exercise was shown in an occasional walk to the beach, in the hope that the nearer approach of the boat might inform him with more certainty whether her course lay towards the town. Nothing however was gained by these visits; no boat came in view, and the gloom forbade further observation. The craft was some seven or eight miles, at least, from shore when she was last seen, and the fisherman, giving up all hope of learning more that night, threw his weary frame upon his tattered couch and sunk into a profound sleep.

During the night a growl of the house-dog, and the tread of a foot upon the gravel, woke the uneasy-slumbering dame, but the sound had died away amidst the plash of waves upon the strand, before she could rouse the heavy and torpid frame of her snoring lord. When at last he woke, it was only to utter a drowsy and bewildered reproof for the annoyance he had suffered, and to fall back again into his former deep unconsciousness. At early dawn, however, he was abroad, breathing the sharp, cold breeze of the clear morning. Below his hut, seaward, he could descry upon the beach, some miles short of Point Look Out, the small craft which, on the previous evening, he had noted standing across the river. It was a suspicious sight to see a boat at such

a time in such a place; and connecting it with the circumstances his wife had remarked in the night, Fluke found reason enough to put himself on the watch for the person who controlled its motions. He accordingly went into his hut, and sticking under his girdle a horseman's pistol which he kept for domestic defence, and taking a stout white-oak staff in his hand, he trudged forth along the margin of the river, resolved to plant himself in some advantageous position, whence he might intercept any one who should approach the boat by land. He had not left his door above half an hour, before his wife observed a traveller, in a seaman's dress partially concealed by a grey cloak, striding on foot along the field contiguous to the beach, in the same direction that her husband had just taken. The mastiff of the household was the first to challenge the stranger, by springing almost to his heel,—a trespass that was instantly resented by a sturdy blow from a walking-stick that sent the dog yelping back to the hut.

"St. Iago! I will kill the dog!" exclaimed the wayfarer. "Woman," he added, as soon as he became aware that the dame had her eye upon him, "why dost thou not chain up the beast? By my hand! I will make short work with him if he interrupt me again." And without waiting to hear the dame's half-chiding, half-encouraging address to the dog—"Get thee in, for a saucy, old, honest snarler!" or her defence of him: "He will not hurt you, sir; his growl is worse than his bite,"—he strode so rapidly onward as soon to be out of view.

In less than an hour after sunrise, the little cha-

loupe was seen laying her course gallantly before the wind, with her tiny sail filled almost to bursting, as she bore for the opposite side of the Potomac. The dame busied herself in preparing her morning meal, to be in readiness for her husband's return, and in checking the impatient petitions of her urchin brood, who hung around to beg for a morsel of fried fish from the pan, or a slice of corn bread, to stay their fresh appetites, until the coming of the father should be a signal for a more orderly assault. Ever and anon, she went to the door to cast an eye along the river bank, and to watch the little craft, the subject of so much curiosity, as it measured its rapid transit towards the Virginia shore.

"Simon Fluke, I believe in the heart of me," she said, after having gone a dozen times to the door, "thinks no more of his breakfast than if it were wet sea-weed just out of the river: the fish, with one turn more, will not be fit for a Christian to eat;—and here are these children ready to munch their own fingers for food. I wish to the saints, the man could learn some thought of his meals when they are ready for him! But I might as well talk to a flounder as to Simon Fluke."

CHAPTER IX.

It creeps, the swarthy funeral train,
The corse is on the bier.

LEONORA.

THE distant bell of St. Inigoe's was heard summoning the priests of the House to the chapel service of the Vigil of All Souls,—or, in other words, the season had now advanced as far as high noon on the last day of October, when the quay in front of the Crow and Archer was enlivened by the gossipping faces of a group of quidnuncs who had assembled there in the warm sunshine, to discuss a most melancholy piece of intelligence which had just come to town, and which was debated with that characteristic respect for truth and decent spirit of condolence with which horrible accidents and distressing casualties are generally propagated.

"There's proclamation of hue and cry out," said Willy of the Flats, speaking as one who had obtained possession of a state secret—"I heard it myself, but now, at the mansion, from Master Llewellen, who was sent for, on set purpose, by his Lordship, to make proclamation by hue and cry as fast as it can be writ down."

"Good reason!" replied Mug the sexton; "I'll warrant you Tiquassino's men have slipped across the bay, with Jackanapes or Robin Hood at their lead, to whet their knives on Christian flesh; and if they are to be caught, we must do it quick, I can tell you, neighbours. Will the body be brought to town?"

"That shall be as Master Coroner shall order," said Garret Weasel, with the air of a man who felt himself entitled to instruct the company in matters of law. "No one durst touch the body till the coroner has dealt with it. Giles Ferret must have a fancy, forsooth, to summon me on his jury! but I foiled him on privilege, d'ye see, masters,—for the Sheriff hath set me down on the panel for the provincial court next week;—so no two juries for me, Master Coroner, says I. Lord, lord! I could no more face Simon Fluke's family,—to say nothing of the dead man himself,—in their distress, than I could look upon my own dame in her winding-sheet."

"Troth! you shall never look at me in that dress," exclaimed the laughing landlady, who stood on the skirt of the crowd, hitherto unseen by her husband. "I have pranked out two as pretty men in woollen as yourself, Garret Weasel, before I had the good luck to clap eyes on you; and, faith, I mean to put you to bed with the shovel, ere I go myself. What are the townsfolk good for, that they are not up and abroad to find out the villains who murdered the fisherman?"

"They talk of a following with hot hand," said Derrick Brown, in reply to the question of the hostess, "as soon as the Coroner comes back. The Indians

are lurking somewhere upon the border of the settlements: take my word it will be proved so."

"An' we were sure of that," said Garret Weasel, "I should be for boot and spur, harquebuss and hanger, up and away, lads;—but we must move with caution in the matter till we get lawful ground for an out-riding. Give us the hue and cry before we start."

"Some do say," interposed Master Clink, a mender of kettles, who had left his work so hastily that he had not thrown aside his leather apron, "that the murder was done by Papists in the disguise of Indians."

"I'll warrant you as many lies will be pinned upon the back of this murder as it will hold," said a tall, sallow, spare-built man, who was known as the head constable of the riding of St. George's. "It is ever the fashion now, when a piece of mischief has been practised, for one side or the other to turn it into a church matter. Every body knows that Simon Fluke was as good a Roman as there was in the riding. Why dost thou prate about the Papists, Tom Clink? Who told thee that monstrous lie?"

"By the faith of my body! I did hear it whispered," replied the tinker; "though, as I am an honest man, I did not believe it."

Whilst this little knot of newsmongers continued upon the quay, discussing the rumours of the day and, now and then, enlivening their drooping spirits with a resort to the red lattice of the Crow and Archer, behind which Matty Scamper and Dame Dorothy by turns administered the refreshment of a

cup of ale or some stronger potation, two boats were discovered approaching the harbour from a point below St. Inigoe's, and making as much speed as their complement of oars would allow. As they neared the quay, it became apparent that the first contained a coffin attended by the fisherman's family, and two priests; the second was freighted with the jury under the charge of Master Giles Ferret, the Coroner.

Whilst the boats are approaching, we recur to our narrative where we left it at the conclusion of the last chapter; deeming it necessary to say that the anxious wife, after venting some unavailing and affectionate expressions of impatience at her husband's delay in returning to his breakfast, sat down to her meal, unconscious of the cause that detained her mate, and ascribing his absence to that carelessness of hours which grew out of the nature of his calling. Noon came, and the frugal board was again spread for dinner, but to it came no father of the wondering household;—still the vacant seat was not so unusual a spectacle as to excite alarm. But when the sun began to dip upon the verge of the western horizon, and no trace could be discerned of the homeward step of the fisherman, fears arose in the bosom of his wife,—and long and earnestly she paced the beach and strained her sight to catch his expected form. At length, heading her little household troop, she sallied forth, with hurried step, along the sands, for more than a mile; and finding no vestige of him, returned sorrowfully to her humble roof and gave up the night to that sharpest of all the trials by which grief may assail the human breast,—the half-

hoping, half-fearing, silent, doubting watchfulness for the approach of evil tidings, which the heart, by a strange presentiment, sometimes truly foretells.

At daylight her eldest boy was despatched to the house of St. Inigoe's for aid, and very soon some four or five persons were on foot to scour the country in quest of the lost man. A short search disclosed the dreadful truth: the body was found in a thicket of cedar, with the marks of a bullet through the brain; the spot within a hundred paces of the shore of a small inlet (at this day known as Smith's creek,) that flowed from the Potomac a few miles westward of Point Lookout. There were the foot prints of men upon the beach, and marks of the keel of a boat which had been drawn up on the sand. The wretched wife could only tell of her husband's departure in the morning:—all other recollections, in the depth of her sorrow, were swept from her mind; and the persons who were busy in seeking out the facts of the murder were obliged to leave the spot with nothing better than vague conjectures as to the agency by which it was perpetrated.

The tidings were quickly brought to the town, and the Coroner instantly proceeded with a jury to the spot to perform the duties required by the law. His office was soon discharged, and, as we have seen, he was now, early in the afternoon, on his return with the body of the deceased, attended by the wailing family and the jury who had pronounced their verdict of 'intentional homicide by persons unknown.'

In the excited state of parties, at this crisis, the

Proprietary did not choose to risk a popular tumult. Already, as was usual at that day, regardless of any ascertained fact relating to the murder, common opinion ascribed it to the Indians; whilst the more violent of the factionists noised it abroad as a contrivance of the Catholic party to overawe their adversaries,—directly charging the murder upon the friends of the Proprietary, who, it was alleged, had accomplished it in the garb of Indians. The animosity with which this improbable and, in this case, absurd report (for the deceased was known by many, to be of the same faith with his imputed murderers) was propagated, induced, in the mind of Lord Baltimore, an apprehension of some disturbance, and he had accordingiy directed Captain Dauntrees to keep his force in readiness to suppress any attempt at disorder which might arise. The boats, therefore, were no sooner discovered approaching the quay, than the garrison of the Fort were drawn out by their Captain and marched to the foot of the mulberry at the Town House, where they awaited the funeral procession, which it was designed they should accompany to the grave.

Curiosity, that eager impulse to feast on popular horrors, had brought a considerable crowd of the townspeople to the landing place; community of faith with the deceased had brought many, and the angry and disturbed temper of the times still more. The whole together formed a mass of persons actuated by various passions. The idle stare of that vacant portion of the spectators who came merely to gape at the spectacle, was contrasted with the serene thought-

fulness of those who made it their duty, from religious affinity with the deceased, to attend the remains to the tomb; and still more did it strike the beholder, when it was compared with the stern hatred and ill-concealed scorn of that class of lookers-on who, belonging to the lately baffled party of the disaffected, stood by with scowling brows, whispering contemptuous sneers against their opponents, as these latter busied themselves in ordering the hasty procession which was formed from the quay up the bank towards the Town House.

The two priests who attended the body, clad in their robes, took the lead of the funeral train. The body, borne by four stout men comrades of the deceased, followed; and immediately behind it tottered along with uncertain step, the fisherman's wife, in rude and neglected attire, sobbing convulsively—her apron thrown over her head, and her walk guided by a friendly matron whose frequent but abortive efforts at consolation seemed only to produce fresh bursts of sorrow. After these came the unconscious children, dressed in their homely holiday suits, looking around them with faces of constrained seriousness, which scarcely repressed the broad expression of the gratified interest they took in the novel scene around them. Many of the townspeople of both sexes formed in the procession, which was brought up in the rear by the company of musqueteers, who wheeled into the line of march, as the last of the marshalled followers of the body passed from beneath the shade of the mulberry. The bell of the Chapel of St. Mary's tolled whilst the train moved,

at a measured pace, towards the church door, where being met by father Pierre, the corpse was deposited in the aisle; and the good priest, with such despatch as might comport with the solemnity of his duty, performed the appointed service of the dead, in the presence of the large body of spectators who had pressed into the building.

Whilst the crowd was still engaged as witnesses of this scene, a rumour was whispered around that the proclamation of hue and cry had just been put forth by the council. A messenger came for Captain Dauntrees, who was observed, immediately afterward, silently to steal forth from the church, and to take his way with hasty strides towards the Proprietary mansion. By degrees, one after another, the spectators followed, and were soon discovered in groups scattered about the town; until, at last, the corpse was left with but few more attendants than were necessary to perform the proper duties of sepulture.

Half an hour had scarcely elapsed before mounted men were seen galloping through the avenues of the little city. The silence which attended the funeral procession was exchanged for busy and clamorous conversation; the bell had ceased to toll, and in its place the notes of a trumpet were successively heard at several points, as a horseman paced from place to place, and read the proclamation calling on the burghers to follow with Hue and Cry the perpetrators of the vile murder of honest Simon Fluke. In process of time, this bustle subsided into a more orderly and quiet gossip; the trumpeter had spent his last

breath in braying forth the official summons to pursue the murderer, and had gladly put away his noisy instrument; the riders had ceased to throw up the dust of the highways; the inquisitive dames of the town and its marvelling maidens had no more news to seek in the open air, and had withdrawn beneath the shelter of their respective roofs:—the churchyard was deserted by all but the sexton and his comrade of the spade, who now were smoothing the sides of the new-made grave; and the tap-room of the Crow and Archer was once more enlivened by the pot-and-pipe companions who were wont to render its evening atmosphere murky and political. In short, the murder of Simon Fluke had, in the marvellous brief period of a few hours, ceased to be the engrossing wonder of the day, and the city of St. Mary's was partially restored to its usual routine of ale-drinking and news-telling;—making proper allowance for the fact, that about a dozen men had ridden forth to scour the country in quest of the murderers, who on their part had only been allowed a day and a half to make their escape, and that the good people who staid at home were holding themselves in readiness to be as much excited as ever with any tidings that might arrive tending towards the probable ascertainment of the perpetrators of the crime.

CHAPTER X.

Whilst the burial of the fisherman, and the topics to which it gave rise, engrossed the attention of young and old in the town, Albert Verheyden, dressed in a riding suit with a winter surcoat or horseman's cassock loosely thrown around his person, made his appearance on horseback at the Rose Croft. He had engaged to ride towards the Chesapeake with Colonel Talbot and a troop of followers, to explore the country as far down as Point Look-out, where rumour had already affirmed certain Indians of suspicious bearing to have recently landed from the opposite shore of the Chesapeake. Talbot himself had projected this expedition mainly with a view to sift out and expose the calumny which imputed the recent murder to the friends of the Proprietary; and he was the more whetted in his purpose by a secret expectation that a vigorous endeavour would enable him not only to refute the slander, but to furnish evidence of the agency of the opposite party in the perpetration of the crime. It is one of the base arts of unprincipled politicians, he argued, ever to be among the first in charging upon the innocent the wicked devices by which they

accomplish their own designs. He had resolved, therefore, to take the matter in hand himself, and, at the head of a party of the townspeople, ransack the country around the scene of the murder, for every item of proof which might bring to light its authors. There was, in addition to this motive, an undefined and misty connexion in his mind, of the murder with the stories told of the goblins of the haunted Chapel, —a conviction of some wicked influence—active, he did not exactly know how, in stimulating the crime. He was no disbeliever in sorcery and witchcraft, and a vague thought hovered over his meditation that the fisherman's death might be traced to persons holding relations with the spirits of the Chapel. He set forth, therefore, on his adventure with a presentiment that some startling disclosure would soon be made, which should still more awaken the thoughts of the government to the mischievous character of the beings who infested the region bordering on the bay.

His purpose being made known in the family of the Proprietary, it was with a modest yet eager petition that Albert Verheyden asked leave to accompany him on the expedition,—a request which was granted with even more alacrity than that with which it was made. The hour appointed for setting out was delayed only until a sufficient party should be collected; and this was retarded by the ceremony of the funeral and the common anxiety to await the tidings expected by the coroner and his attendants. In the meantime, the Secretary, feeling more concern in the affairs at the Rose Croft than in the gossip of

the town, repaired thither to await the moment of departure, having commissioned the young Benedict Leonard to ride as far as the Collector's and give him warning when the troop should take the road—a service which the heir apparent promised to perform with the greater satisfaction, as it assigned him some show of duty in the general engrossment of the household, and therefore conferred upon him an importance interesting to his vanity.

The Secretary had been seated for sometime in the parlour with Blanche, where he related to her the story of the fisherman's murder with a touching sadness; and when he told her of his purposed adventure, it was with a prouder tone than he had ever assumed before; there was even perceptible in it a trace of self-exaltation altogether unusual in his speech. He was now a bolder and more assured man, and his character began to assume a more confident development. Blanche listened with maidenly reserve, as if she was almost ashamed to confess the interest she took in Master Albert's communication. She was solicitous for his health and comfort in the dreary ride through the woods he was about to undertake, and which might be prolonged until late at night; and she was fain almost to advise him against such an exposure,—but she feared to tell him so much, lest it might be thought taking too great a freedom. Thus engrossed, the hours flew by unheeded and, in truth, forgotten, until the afternoon had reached nearly four o'clock, when suddenly Benedict Leonard, without announcement or even premonitory rap at the door, entered the parlour.

"Goodness, Master Albert!" he exclaimed, "think of me—such a crack-noddle! You will never trust me again, I may make sure of that. Would you believe it, I rode full two miles past the Rose Croft here, with my uncle Talbot and John Alward, and all the people on their way to hunt the murderers, without so much as ever once thinking of you? I said, when we started, I would ride as far as St. Inigoe's mill, and then come back; and I as clear forgot you till I stopped at the mill, as if there was no such person as you or Blanche Warden in the wide world: and I might have thought of Mistress Blanche too, because my Aunt Maria gave me a message for her—now what is it? Oh, it is gone,—it is gone! a plague on it! that's got out of my head too. No matter, Master Albert, my uncle Talbot told me to say, when we parted, that he would be on the path which leads down to Point Look Out, and that you must follow as fast as you can."

"It is late in the evening for so long a ride, Master Albert," said Blanche, as with a look of alarm she involuntarily laid her hand upon his shoulder; "you will not venture alone so near night-fall?"

"I should be accounted a most faithless laggard, if I staid behind now," replied the Secretary. "There is a broad road for some four miles, and I will go at speed till I overtake the riders. At the greatest mischance," he added, smiling, whilst he buttoned his over-coat closely across his breast, "'tis but a night in the woods. I will keep this vigil of Hallow Mass like a hermit—or rather like a squire of chivalry

undergoing the ordinance of knighthood, by watching over his sword. The holy saints be with you, mistress! I must set good store by the day-light and turn it to account: farewell, till we meet again!"

"Farewell!" faintly echoed the maiden; "Master Albert, let us see you to-morrow."

"If I was Master Albert," said Benedict Leonard to Blanche, when the Secretary left the room, "I would court favour with Mistress Coldcale to get a slice of something from the larder; oh, this riding gives an appetite, I warrant you, that a man will eat his sleeve for want of better provender! There, Master Albert is gone," added the youth, as the Secretary was seen to pass the window, "and I must back to the mansion before sunset; my mother will be making me a pretty discourse about rheums and catarrhs and all her other ailments, if I be caught abroad after candle light this time o' year—especially, too, as it looks like rain: so, good even, Mistress Blanche!" and with this speech, the heir apparent took his leave, abandoning the maiden to her meditations.

When Albert Verheyden turned out upon the high-road he put spurs to his horse and raised his speed to a gallop, until he found himself immersed in the hills and ravines which lay about the head of St. Inigoe's. One or two wayfarers whom he had chanced to meet, had answered his inquiry after his companions, by informing him that a troop of townspeople, consisting of some eight or ten, had passed along the road at a pretty brisk motion, not less than three or four miles ahead of him. The broken coun-

try into which he had plunged, (the road winding through narrow dells and surmounting short and steep acclivities,) the thickets that tangled his path, and the occasional swamps of the low grounds, forced him to slacken his pace and proceed with greater caution on his route. The prints of horses' hoofs upon the damp soil, in places, were fresh and showed him that he was not only on the right track, but also that he was at no great distance behind his company. The sky was overcast, and the clouds, as the sun came nearer to the horizon, assumed by degrees still more and more of that misty, dun-coloured hue which indicated the approach of a settled rain. A sombre, dark grey tint, unrelieved by light and shade, fell over the whole landscape and gave a cheerless and sullen aspect to the woods. Once or twice the Secretary reined up his horse and directed his eyes toward the heavens, as he meditated an abandonment of his expedition and a return home before night-fall, but as often his pride forbade a retreat whilst his comrades were afield, and he resumed his journey. He was in momentary expectation of overtaking the party in advance, and made sure of doing so when he should reach the fisherman's hut upon the river beach, towards which it was his purpose to direct his way. Occasionally, a farm-house opened upon his view across a distant field; but he was unwilling to lose the time which a digression from his road to visit it would have required, only for the sake of assuring himself of his road, with which he believed himself to be sufficiently acquainted. At length,

night began to fall around him and his path to become sadly perplexed. At times, he could scarce make out its traces in the obscurity of the wood; at times, it broke upon his view with fresh distinctness, as it traversed a region of white sand, and thus served only to lure him forward with more alacrity, in the hope of soon reaching the margin of the river, from whence, even in the dark, he knew he could find his way back—at least, as far as the house of St. Inigoe's, where he could get shelter for the night. Now and then, his hopes were dashed by finding himself involved in those thickets of alder and bay which denote the presence of a marsh, and he was obliged to thread his difficult track around the head of some inlet from the river. It grew at last to be dark night, and, to add to his discomfort, the rain began to fall. The Secretary dismounted from his horse and stood, with suppressed breath, endeavouring to catch the sound of distant waves, hoping to find himself near enough to the river to obtain this guide to his footstep; but all was silent, except the pattering of rain upon the dry leaves of the forest, and the impatient pawing of his horse upon the sod. He shouted aloud for his lost companions, but his voice echoed, without a response, through the lonesome wood. "I jested with thee," he muttered to himself, in a jocular tone, referring to the maiden who was ever uppermost in his thoughts, "I jested with thee, but a few hours ago, upon my keeping a vigil of Hallow Mass in the woods. Dear Blanche, I thought nothing farther away than that jest should be true; but here my

evil destiny hath brought me, for a punishment, to make it real. Well, I can endure. Heart of grace,—I will confront it manfully! I would I could but raise a fire. I can fast upon my vigil and think nothing of it,—if it were not that my limbs are chilled and my joints growing stiff with cold."

He now groped around to gather some dry wood, hoping, by the aid of his pistol, to kindle a blaze by which he might warm himself and prepare to spend the night in more comfort than on his horse. He laboured in vain, for every thing he could lay his hand on was saturated with moisture. At length, he mounted again into his saddle, determined to ride onward until he should chance to find some place of shelter. He had now not only lost his path, but also all perception of his course: the darkness confused him, and he therefore plodded on at a slow pace, unconscious to what quarter of the compass his footsteps tended, and discouraged with the thought that every moment, perhaps, carried him still further from the home he was anxious to seek.

For a while his spirits sustained him without drooping. A man in such a situation sometimes finds motives of cheerfulness in the very desperation of his circumstances. Under some such ludicrous impulse our wanderer, as he plied his uneasy journey through the dark, broke forth in song, and in succession poured out nearly the full treasures of his musical memory; but wearying of this at last, his note changed to whispered sighs of self-reproof for the folly of venturing alone into such a wilderness at such an hour. His mind then ran upon the images which the creed of

that day supplied to the imagination of our progenitors,—the "swart fairy," "blue, meagre hag," the spirit of the wood, the wizard and the spectre; then came dreams of banditti and outlaws, prowling savages, and thoughts of some accidental coming alone upon the den of the murderers, whose recent doings had occasioned his present ride. With these fancies swaying his mind, he grew apprehensive and distrustful at every step. There are moments when the stoutest heart will quail before the conjurations of the imagination: and it is no disparagement of the bravery of the Secretary to say, that, on this night, he sometimes felt a shudder creeping over him, at the fictions of his own excited fancy. The rustle of leaves, or the short snap of a rotten bough, as the fox prowled along his stealthy path, more than once caused him to put his hand upon his sword and to ride cautiously forward, as if in certain expectation of a foe; and not until he had thrice challenged the imaginary comer, did he relax his grasp of his weapon.

In this state of mind, for full four hours after dark, did he wander, uncertain of his way, through wood and over plain, mid brush and brier, over fen and field. At length, his ear could plainly distinguish the beat of waves upon a strand, and it was with a joyfull change of feeling that he believed himself, after so weary a circuit, approaching the margin of the river, along which he was aware he should have a plainer ride, with the certainty, in the course of a mile or two, of finding some human habitation. As the sound of the waters grew stronger, whilst he ad-

vanced to the beach, his eye was, all at once, greeted with the welcome sight of a taper glimmering through the glade, and, by its steady light, assuring him that no Will-o'-the-wisp, as sometimes he feared, had risen to bewilder his journey.

With new courage and reviving strength he shaped his course towards the friendly ray;—on which pursuit we must now leave him, to attend to other personages in our story.

CHAPTER XI.

> Have not we
> A commonwealth amongst ourselves, ye Tripolites?
> A commonwealth? a kingdom! And I am
> The prince of Qui-va-las, your sovereign thief,
> And you are all my subjects.
>
> THE SISTERS.

WHEN Cocklescraft asked for Godfrey's horse on the night that succeeded the prize-play, the reader will remember that, as Captain Dauntrees overheard the conversation, it was accompanied with an avowal of a purpose to *warn* an enemy, whose name was not disclosed, of some premeditated harm which the speaker designed to inflict.

The broad arrow scratched on the door of the Collector's dwelling, when discovered on the ensuing morning, plainly enough referred to the fearful menace of the seaman, and sufficiently indicated how bitter was his change of feeling against the peaceful inmates of the Rose Croft. Mr. Warden attached but little consequence to the implied threat, nor troubled himself with measures to guard against the intended mischief, believing it to be but an ebullition of that spirit of disaffection which the prompt mea-

sures of the council had already so far rebuked as to leave but little to apprehend.

Cocklescraft, immediately after returning to the town from his midnight ride, went on board of his brigantine, and quietly weighing anchor, set sail down the river and thence across the Potomac—here some eight miles wide—and finally, before daylight, made his way into a small creek on the Virginia shore, a few miles above Smith's Point, or Cape St. Gregory. Here his vessel lay sheltered from the observation of the few boats which passed up and down the Potomac—thus affording him probable security against pursuit; whilst, at the same time, the inhabitants of this region were reputed generally to be friends to the cause of the Fendalls, and enemies of long standing to the Proprietary. He had, therefore, only to make known the colours under which he had lately taken service, and he might assure himself of stout partisans in his defence.

On the second night after his arrival at this retreat, up to which period he had remained ignorant of all that had transpired in the town in regard to the arrest of his comrades, he threw a cloak over his shoulders and taking a common sailor-cap got into his yawl, which was now rigged with a mast and sail, and steered for a point on the Maryland shore but a short distance below the hut of the fisherman. His motive for this caution, in not approaching nearer to the town, arose from an apprehension that he might be watched by the garrison of the Fort, and perhaps pursued to his lurking place—an apprehension suggested by that sense of guilt which predominated

over every other feeling, since his desertion of his late friends and—what weighed with heavier terror upon his mind—his abandonment of his church. To avoid this notice he landed near the mouth of St. Mary's river, and proceeded from that point, on foot, to the town, a distance of some five or six miles. In his journey along the beach, he had passed by the hut of the fisherman, and had crossed the creek of St. Inigoe's, immediately from the Jesuit House over to the Collector's landing place, being enabled to make this passage in the manner detailed by the Superior to the Lord Proprietary. Upon his arrival at the Crow and Archer after night, he became acquainted, for the first time, with the arrest of the conspirators. This intelligence hastened him away to hold a short interview with Chiseldine, by whom he was admonished to tarry as short a time as possible in the port, as orders were already abroad for his apprehension. The advice thus timely offered enabled him to effect a speedy retreat to his boat, by the same route that he had taken in coming to the town;—and he was thus saved from the fate that would have overtaken him, if he had remained an half hour longer than the moment of the fiddler's visit to Captain Dauntrees.

Tired of lying perdue so long on the Virginia shore, he determined to proceed with his brig, first to St. Jerome's, where he proposed to wait two or three days to observe the course of events, and then either to sail abroad or take his course up the Chesapeake, where, if pursued, he was willing to trust to the speed of his vessel to baffle all endeavours to-

wards his arrest. Upon the deck of the Olive Branch,—or as she has now laid aside her peaceful character we may call her the Escalfador—he felt himself secure against annoyance from any naval force at the disposal of the Proprietary, and this circumstance, together with a strong confidence in the number of the disaffected with whom he was associated, inspired him with an audacity that almost defied the public authorities even in their own resorts.

With a view to communicate his intended change of position to his confederates, he made his second visit to the town pretty nearly in the same manner that he had accomplished the first. His stay in the port, however, was longer than on the former night, and it was consequently after break of day that he passed the hut of Simon Fluke. On his near approach to the spot where his skiff awaited him, he encountered the fisherman, who was lurking upon his path and who, at the moment they came within speaking distance, was endeavouring to conceal himself in a thicket of cedars. Cocklescraft was not a man to hesitate in the commission of a crime under any circumstances, and least of all when it concerned his safety. On the present occasion he did not stop to parley with the person who waylaid his footsteps, but obeying the impulse of his habitual sense of hostility to his kind, and the ferocity of his nature, he drew a pistol from his girdle and discharged the contents with such certain effect, that the fisherman fell dead at his feet without a groan. He tarried not to look upon the murdered man, nor to take any concern even for the disposal of the

body,—but leaving it a prey to the wild birds that hovered near, he stept into his boat with as little emotion or remorse as if he had despatched some prowling beast, not caring to inquire who or what he was that invaded his path.

On the night that followed this adventure the Olive Branch quitted her temporary harbour, and the next morning found her secretly ensconced behind a woody headland, in a nook of St. Jerome's creek,—about two miles above its mouth, where she lay safe from the view of all who navigated the Chesapeake.

Cocklescraft began already to feel that he had joined his new associates in an hour not the most auspicious to his fortunes. The arrest of the leaders and the quiet that seemed to prevail throughout the land, created a doubt in his mind whether any thing was likely to be achieved in the way that he desired; and more than once he meditated a retreat from the province, yet resolved, before he did so, to signalise the event by some flagrant act of vengeance upon his enemies. This thought seemed to please him; and he spent the day in ruminating over schemes of retribution against those who had of late treated him with such contumely. Uppermost in his breathings of hatred was the name of Albert Verheyden, and a demon smile curled upon his lip when he muttered it.

Such provision as might hastily be made for a short voyage, now engrossed the attention of his crew. His armament was put in order; water taken in, and every thing done,—except the stowing on board of such commodities as he designed to take away to other markets,—to prepare him for sailing

within the next twenty-four hours, if occasion should require.

When night came on, and the rain fell, and the moon was quenched, and the murky, cheerless atmosphere, so congenial with the unlawful complexion of his designs, admonished him how little likely it was that prying feet or watchful eyes should be abroad, a revel was held in the Wizard's Chapel. Amidst the lumber that lay piled in confusion over the floor of the rude but spacious building, room was found for a rough table, around which empty casks, broken boxes and other appropriate furniture of a smuggler's den, supplied seats sufficient for the accommodation of twelve or fifteen persons. Here were assembled the crew of the Escalfador, with an abundant supply of strong liquors and tobacco. A fire blazed on the ample hearth, furnishing to such as desired it the means of cooking, in a simple fashion, some substantial elements of the evening meal; an opportunity which was not neglected, as was apparent from the bones and scraps of broken victuals which lay scattered about the fire-place, and from the strong fumes of roasted meat which sent their savour into every corner of the apartment.

The men who constituted this company, numbering without their leader full sixteen, were robust, swarthy seamen,—the greater portion of them distinguished by the dark olive complexions and curling black hair which denoted their origin in Portugal or other parts of the South of Europe. Several wore rings in the ears and on the fingers, and were bedizened with strange and outlandish jewelry. The

thick moustache and shaggy brow gave a peculiar ferocity to more than one of the company, whilst the close and braided seaman's jacket, gaudy woollen caps and wide breeches—the common costume of the crew—imparted a foreign air to the whole group. Some wore rich girdles with ornamented pistols and daggers; and the plainest amongst them showed a knife secured under a leathern belt. Their only attendant was Kate of Warrington, who grudgingly answered the frequent call for fresh potations, as the revellers washed down their coarse mirth with draughts of brandy and usquebaugh.

Cocklescraft sat, somewhat elevated above the rest, at the head of the board, where, without carousing as deeply as his sailors, he stimulated their noisy jollity by clamorous applause. A witness, rather than a partaker of this uncouth wassail, was the Cripple, who having matters of account to settle with several of the crew before they took their departure, had now swung himself into a corner where, with a lighted fagot stuck in the crevice of the wall, he alternately gave his attention to a pouch containing his papers of business, and to the revelry of the moment; chiding the prodigal laughter of the crew, one moment with querulous reproof, and the next with a satirical merriment.

"Bowse it lads!" exclaimed Cocklescraft, as he brandished a cup in his hand; "drain dry to the Escalfador!—our merry little frigate shall dance tomorrow on the green wave,—so, do honour to the last night we spend ashore. Remember, we have a reckoning to settle before we depart, with the good

folks of St. Mary's. Are you all ready to follow me in an exploit of rare deviltry?—Speak, boys!"

"Ay, ready, Master Captain!" was the response in a general shout.

This outburst roused the Cripple, who lifting his head from the paper, which at that moment he was perusing, and looking from under his spectacles upon the crew, was heard to mutter when the shout subsided—"As ready as wolves to suck the blood of lambs. How can they be else under thy nursing, Dickon?"

"Ha, old dry bones, art thou awake? By St. Iago! I thought that thy leaden eyelids, Rob, had been sealed before this. Ho, lads, bring Master Robert Swale forward—we shall treat him as becomes a man of worship:—upon the table with him, boys."

The face of the Cripple grew instantly red, as a sudden flash of passion broke across it. He dropped the paper from his hand and drew his dagger;—then, with a compressed lip and kindling eye, spoke out—"By St. Romuald! the man that dares to lay hand on me to move me where it is not my pleasure to go, shall leave as deep a blood stain on this floor as flowed from the veins of Paul Kelpy. Who are you, Dickon Cocklescraft, that you venture to bait me with your bullies?"

"How now, Master Rob?" exclaimed the Skipper, as he rose from his seat and approached the Cripple. "Would'st quarrel with friends? 'Twas but in honest reverence, and not as against your will, that I would have had thee brought to the table. Come,

old comrade, we will not be ruffled when we are to part so soon. What would'st thou have, good Rob?"

"These bills shall be first paid by your drinking roysters before they go to sea," replied the Cripple, somewhat appeased by the Skipper's manner. "Here are items of sundry comforts supplied—meat and drink and lodging;—and here are services of Mistress Kate both in making and mending;—here for trampling down my corn, and for killing——"

"Pshaw—a fig's end for thy trampings and killings, and all this rigmarole of washing and mending!" interrupted Cocklescraft. "I would be sworn thy conscience has undercharged thy commodity:—so, there is enough to content thee for the whole, with good usury to the back of it," he said, putting a well-stored purse of gold into Rob's hand. "Thou hast ever been too modest in thy dealings, friend Robert of the Trencher:—when thou gettest older thou wilt know how to increase thy gear by lawful gain."

"A hang-dog—a scape-grace—a kill-cow—a devil's babe in swaddling bands of iniquity, thou art, child Dickon!" said Rob, laughing with that bitter, salt laugh that gave to his countenance the expression of extreme old age. "Thou dost not lack, with all thy wickedness, an open hand. I have ever found thee ready with thy gold. It comes over the devil's back—Dickon, ha, ha!—over the devil's back, youngster,—and it goes—you know the proverb. This closes accounts, so now for your humour, lads. I will pledge you in a cup."

"To the table with him, boys," said Cocklescraft, nodding his head to those who sat near him; and, in a moment, the Cripple was lifted up in his bowl and set, like a huge dish, in the middle of the board,—a ghastly grin of acquiescence playing all the time upon his sallow features.

"Fill me a glass of that wine of Portugal," said Rob, as soon as he found himself in the centre of the company. "Here, boys," he added when the wine was put in his hand, "here is success to your next venture, and a merry meeting to count your gains."

"Amen to that!" shouted Cocklescraft. "Our next venture will be a stoop upon the doves of St. Mary's."

"And a merry meeting will it be when you count your gains," interposed the harsh voice of Kate of Warrington. "Robert Swale will keep the reckoning of it."

"Peace, old woman," said Cocklescraft, sharply; "your accursed croaking is ever loudest when least welcome."

"Fill for me," crid out Roche del Carmine, in his Portuguese accent. "I will pledge the Captain and our company, with 'His Lordship's Secretary,'—we owe him a debt which shall be paid in the coin of the Costa Rica."

"Bravo,—A la savanna, perros!—Huzza, boys,—shout to that!" clamoured Cocklescraft, at the top of his voice. "Drink deep to it, in token of a deep vengeance! I thank you, Master Roche, for this remembrance. Now, comrades, you have but half

an hour left before you must depart to bring down the brigantine to the mouth of the creek. A pipe and a glass more—and then away: so, too it roundly, and make profit of your time!—Tobacco, Mistress Kate,—fill Master Swale's pipe first, and then mine:—make the bottle stir, my merry men all!"

Having thus given a new spur to the revelry of the board, the Skipper, unasked, broke forth with a smoking song familiar to the tavern-haunters of that era.

"Tobacco's a musician,
And in a pipe delighteth;
It descends in a close
Through the organ of the nose,
With a relish that inviteth.
This makes me sing, So, ho, ho! so, ho, ho, boys.
Ho, boys, sound I loudly,
Earth never did breed
Such a jovial weed
Whereof to boast so proudly."

"The cackle of a wild goose, the screech of a kingfisher in foul weather, hath more music in it, Dickon Cocklescraft, than this thou call'st singing," said Rob. "I would counsel thee stick to thy vocation—thy vocation, Master Shark, of drinking and throat-cutting, and leave this gentle craft of music-making to such as have no heart to admire thy virtues. Ha, ha!"—he paused a moment to indulge his laugh. "When a galliard of thy kidney, dashed with such poisonous juices as went into the milk that fed thee, hath a conceit to be merry, the fire-crack-

ling of roof trees and the clashing of steel are the fittest melody for his mirth. Dickon, try no more ditties, thou wilt never make a living by the art."

"By St. James! I have sung at more honourable feasts than it ever fell to your lot to partake of. Ay, and lady-songs, too,—and been applauded for my voice, old goblin of the Bowl! Have I not sung at the back of Sir Harry Morgan's chair, in the great hall of the Governor of Chagres, in the Castle St. Lawrence, when we made feast there after the sack of the place?"

"Truly," replied the Cripple; "whilst the hall streamed with blood, and the dead corpse of the Governor was flung like rubbish into a corner, to give more zest to your banquet—and the women—"

"You have a license, Rob of the Trencher," interrupted Cocklescraft, "to snarl at those you cannot excel. So e'en take your own sweep! When you can better sing a better song, then I will hearken to thee."

"On my conscience, can I now, at this very speaking, Dickon Cocklescraft," said the Cripple, "a better song than ever trilled through thy pipes.

> All dainty meats, I do defy,
> Which feed men fat as swine,' "—

he sung, by way of proof of his skill, with a tremulous cadence and melancholy whine, as he flourished his pipe in a line with his eyes, and nodded his head to mark the time.

"The man has gone clean mad," ejaculated Kate of Warrington, who had for some time past been

quietly seated on a stool near the fire, and who now arose and stepped up to the table to satisfy herself that it was actually the Cripple whose voice had aroused her. "Thou hadst better be telling thy beads and repenting of thy sins upon thy shrivelled hams, than tinkling thy cracked and worn-out voice at midnight, to be laughed at by guzzling fools—barked at by sea-dogs! It is time, Robert Swale, thy old bones were stretched on thy bed."

"Faith, thou say'st true, Mistress Nightshade," replied Rob; "thou speak'st most truly: I am over easy to be persuaded into unwholesome merriment—it hath been the sin of my life. So, put me on the floor—and now my crutches—my sticks, Kate. There—thy lantern, Kate."

"Away, lads, to the brigantine," said Cocklescraft, rising from his seat. "When you get her at anchor off the Chapel, come ashore and pipe me up with the boatswain's whistle. We have some boxes here to put on board; and then, good fellows, we will make a flight into the city, and ruffle the sleep of some of the burghers, by way of a farewell. Rob, I will go with you to your cabin: I shall catch an hour's sleep in my cloak."

"As thou wilt—as thou wilt, Dickon," returned the Cripple as he set forth, with a brisk fling, on his journey, lighted by the lantern of the beldam.

"Leave the lamp burning," said Cocklescraft to the last of the crew, as the man was about to follow his companions who had already left the room; "it will serve to steer by when the brigantine comes out of the creek."

In the next moment the Wizard's Chapel was deserted by all its late noisy tenants, and the Skipper was on his way, in the track of the Cripple, towards the hut.

CHAPTER XII.

Cold drove the rain—November's wind
Sang to the night with dreary din:
A wanderer came, but did not find
A heart or hand to let him in.

GLENGONAR'S WASSAIL.

As Albert Verheyden approached nearer to the light that had broken upon his view and cheered his footstep, he was able to discern the dim outline of a building of ample dimensions, obscurely traced on the eastern horizon, now relieved of that back-ground of forest which had hitherto circumscribed his vision. The rain still continued to fall in a soft and steady drizzle, through which a feeble, diffused light barely sufficed to show that the moon, now entering on her second quarter, struggled to assert her dominion over the night. The wave rolling in upon the sand with a ceaseless and sharp monotony, apprised him of the proximity of a broad expanse of water, and he had accordingly little doubt that he had now reached the shore of the Potomac—somewhere, as he conjectured, in the neighbourhood of the cabin of Simon Fluke, whither he supposed his steps had unknowingly tended through the long and perplexed circuit of his bewildered journey.

When within an hundred paces of the light, he found his further progress on horseback embarrassed by a somewhat precipitous bank, which induced him to alight and make the rest of his way on foot, leaving his horse attached to the drooping limb of the tree under which he had dismounted. With eager step he advanced to the house and on reaching the door, knocked loudly for admission.

"Good people," he exclaimed as he repeated his knocks, "arouse for the sake of a benighted wanderer who has lost his way in the wood. Pray you, give me admittance."

There was no answer; and finding that upon touching the latch the door yielded to his thrust, he entered without farther ceremony. The embers of a large fire glowed on the hearth: a solitary iron lamp, supplied with the fat of some animal, instead of oil, burned, with a bickering flame, upon the middle of a coarse table, over which cups and cans, glasses and bottles were strewed in disorder; pipes lay scattered around, and the coarse hempen covers of bales and cordage of broken packages lumbered up the corners of the room. As the Secretary raked up the glowing coals and warmed himself before the welcome fire, it was with an air of wonderment, not unmixed with apprehension, that he cast his eyes around this strange and uncouth place, and lost himself in the attempt to conjecture whither his erring fortune had conducted him.

"Here have been dwellers," he said, "and recently; but whither have they fled? Can I have so far

lost my way as to have straggled to the Patuxent, instead of the Potomac? Faith, I believe it; for I have heard my Lord has a store-house there, where he collects his customs—and this, by what I see around me, must be some such place. Well, Patuxent or Potomac, I care not which;—most heartily is the roof welcome; for, beyond this I venture not again to-night. I would I might see the keepers here! Surely they are not far off, since their flagons are left behind—and not drained, neither, by the mark! for here I find good drinking ware, which, to my poor, spent frame is no boon to be despised. I greet you, honest nectar," he said, as he poured out some wine and drank it off; "thou com'st at a good time, and with a smack that your dainty wine-bibbers wot not of.—Heigho! was ever man so weary? I shall stretch me down on these coarse wrappings. And there, good cassock, thou hast done me faithful service to-night: before the fire I spread thee out to dry, and in this corner make my bed."

As these muttered ruminations escaped the Secretary's lips, he collected the remnants of bags and the rough cloths that had formerly served to envelope items of merchandise, into a heap on one side of the fire-place near the wall; and spreading his wet surcoat in front of the live embers which he had now renovated with some billets of wood that lay at hand, he flung his exhausted frame upon his hastily-gathered bed, and in a few moments was locked in a sleep that might have defied the clamour of a marching host.

Here we leave him, whilst we turn to the hut of the Cripple.

The Skipper, intending to meet his men as soon as they should despatch the business upon which they were sent, and desirous to snatch a short repose in the interval of their absence, had thrown himself, immediately after entering Rob's cabin, upon a couch of the skins of wild animals, which the woman of Warrington had spread for him; Rob had withdrawn into his own apartment, and the crone, having now discharged her household cares, hastened over the bank to her solitary lodge. For some time the Cripple remained in an abstracted self-communion, whispering to himself bitter taunts upon his own folly in consorting with the ruffians of the Chapel, and occasionally chuckling with his customary sneer, at the profligate arts by which they collected their wealth, and the dissolute liberality with which it was squandered. After this, according to a usage which was observed with singular exactness for one of his habits of life, he addressed himself to his devotions, with the apparent fervour of a sincere penitent, and scrupulously performed the offices of prayer and meditation appointed by the ordinances of the church to which he belonged. When, at length, he was about to retire to rest, he was not able contentedly to do so, until, with that characteristic solicitude which belonged equally to his temper and the period of his life, he gave a few parting moments to the computation of the gains of the day.

"Dotard!" he exclaimed, as he began to cast up

this account, "I have left my wallet in yonder Chapel, with all my papers. Oh these cup-riots—these heady revels, made for hot-brained fools and prodigal unthrifts! What fellowship should my white hairs and hollow wrinkles find with them, that I must needs turn herdsman to these bears? Folly goeth armed with a scourge, and layeth on roundly, good faith! How have I been whipped by that most wise fool in my time! Well, for a penance, get thee back, thou curtailed and misshapen sinner! get thee back the weary way to the Chapel. Ha! should these night-birds make prize of my written memorials!—Hasten—hasten thee, Rob!—The lantern—the lantern! and then away."

The lantern was lighted and swung by a small chain across his shoulder, and taking his crutches, he was soon beyond his threshold, making good speed to the Wizard's Chapel.

This sudden motion had so far roused his spirit and altered his mood—which was ever fitful and subject to rapid change—that as he swung briskly onward, he found himself humming a tune; and when he had reached the door of the Black House, he was engaged in audibly singing the words of the song which had been so unceremoniously suspended by the interposition of Kate of Warrington:

"He needs no napkin for his hands,
His finger-ends to wipe,
That keeps his kitchen in a box
And roast meat in a pipe."

"Marry, I can troll it with the best of them yet!" he

said, evidently proud of his performance, as he pushed the door open and entered the apartment. His first movement was towards the corner where he had been sitting before he was lifted to the table; here he discovered the leather pouch as he had left it. His eagerness to find what he sought in this spot, rendered him for the moment unobservant of every thing else; but, now, on casting his eyes around him, he perceived the coat of the Secretary hanging in front of the fire and, in the next instant, the figure of Albert Verheyden himself prostrate on his rude pallet, breathing the long and audible inspirations of profound sleep. It was apparent to the Cripple, at a glance, that the person who lay stretched before him was not of the crew of the Skipper. With an instinctive motion he drew his long knife, or dagger, from its sheath, and swayed himself forward to the very side of the sleeping man. The dagger was uplifted, and about to descend with the impulse of a brawny muscle that would have pinned the victim to the floor, when the Cripple suspended the blow, only to make more sure, by the flash of the light of his lantern across the sleeper's face, that the person he was about to assail was one who had no claim, from acquaintance or confederacy, to the privilege of entering under this forbidden roof. When the secret of the Black House was endangered by the rash curiosity of prying eyes, or even by the involuntary knowledge of the casual wanderer, no scruple of conscience, nor shrinking reluctance to do a deed of murder, might withhold the arm of the ruthless ascetic who ruled unquestioned over this fearful domain.

A savage scowl lowered upon his sallow front as he stretched forth his long arm and passed the lantern across the quiet visage of his unconscious victim, whilst his right hand still held the dagger in act to strike. The scowl suddenly changed, as he stooped forward more narrowly to scan the countenance of the sleeping man,—and a strange expression of instant terror took its place. For some seconds his gaze was riveted upon Albert Verheyden's beautiful features, as heaving his head upward, in a casual motion of his slumber, the Secretary threw the whole contour of his face into the full blaze of the light and disclosed his glossy and almost womanish ringlets, which now straggled over his ear and upon his beardless cheek.

"Blessed St. Romuald, shield me from this sight!" murmured Rob, with a slow utterance and whispered voice, whilst with still fixed eyes and a frame trembling in every fibre, he stared upon the image before him. "Is it a spectre conjured hither from the grave, or the juggling cheat of a fiend, that reads to me, in that face, the warning of a life of sin? Oh God!—I cannot strike thee, whatsoe'er thou art! So, in very truth, *she* looked whilst slumbering on her pillow: that same fair forehead—that silken eye-lash, that curling lip. Who art thou, and whence comest? What witchcraft hath thrown thee into this foul abode? Sure, I am awake! I have not closed mine eye to-night. There stand the tokens of this night's debauch;—these cups, these flasks, and this familiar den of villany, all bear testimony that I do not wander in my sleep. These limbs are flesh and blood."

he added, as he raised Albert's yielding hand from his bosom; "and that brow is warm with the heat of healthful action. Holy saints of Heaven! can it be? —What is here?" he suddenly demanded, as his eye caught a glimpse of a jewelled trinket which, as the sleeper lay, was disclosed in the inner folds of his vest, and which the Cripple drew forth by the chain to which it was attached. "'To Louise!'" he exclaimed, when his eye fell upon the simple inscription on the back of the richly mounted miniature—"God of Heaven, by what miracle am I haunted with this sight! Louise—Louise—poor girl! that little portraiture of thyself I gave thee with mine own hand —'tis now two and twenty years ago:—it was a stolen effort of the painter's skill, and thou wert then an angel of light that shed a blissful radiance upon my path. And is it then true, that this Verheyden, upon whose head I have heard ruffian curses heaped and pledged in maddening draughts by devils at their carouse, is thy child, Louise? Mine, I would fain confess, after a long and stubborn life of passionate denial and scornful hate. Oh, Louise!" he groaned aloud, as tears coursed down his withered cheek, whilst he bent over the Secretary and parted the hair from the forehead, upon which he imprinted a kiss; "hapless was thy fate, but doubly wretched mine. William Weatherby, thou hast been the fool and dupe of that devilish disease of thy blood which hath brought showered curses upon thee and thine! There, sleep on the bosom of thy child, mother of an unhappy destiny!" he said, as he quietly replaced the miniature. "This is no place for thee, unwary boy!

I must rouse him ere these blood-hounds fall upon his track——"

"A soaking night, by St. Anthony!" ejaculated the boatswain of the Escalfador, who, at this instant, thrust open the door and, with four or five of the seamen, came clamorously towards the fire. "Push us yon bottle, and let us see if there be any of the stuff left."

"And let us have fire, Master Boatswain; I am chilled to the marrow. Pipe thy best whistle for the Captain: he told thee to pipe it roundly, as soon as the brigantine was out of the creek."

"I warrant you, I will wake him," replied the boatswain, as he went to the door and blew his shrill note.

"Ho, old boy of the bowl! what i' the devil makes thee here?" demanded one of the crew, when his eye fell upon Rob, who had, at the entrance of the men, extinguished his light.

"Knave!" returned the Cripple; "who gave thee license to huff and swagger under this roof? Where is Roche?"

"Aboard the brigantine with five of our messmates. They have her at hand ready to take in the stowage the Captain spoke of."

"We heard as we came across the field," said the boatswain, "the snort of a runaway horse, which this fool Francis must take to be a devil in earnest—and he falls to crossing himself like an old monk in a battle with Belzebub."

"Whisht! we have a traveller here," said Rob, whose restless eye and anxious motion had evinced

the disquiet of his mind, ever since the sailors had burst into the room, and who had now placed himself in such a position as to screen the Secretary from their observation, "a traveller who has doubtless lost his way and wandered into the Chapel."

"Why dost not give him the knife?" interrupted the boatswain, in a whisper; "'tis the old law of the Black House."

"Cut-throat!" ejaculated Rob, "am I to be schooled by thee in the law of the Black House? The stranger hath come at unawares, and is now asleep. He hath seen nothing, heard nothing, and can report against no one. Put a bandage across his eyes before he awakes, and let two of the men bear him, in silence, on their shoulders free of the Chapel, and set him down in the woods. Thou hast stabbing enough, John of Brazil, in thy proper calling, without doing murder in sport."

"Ha, ha! thou preachest, by Saint Longface! Thou'rt growing tender-hearted, father Robert!" said the boatswain, laughing.

"Caitiff! wolf! kite!—thou shark of the bloody mouth!" exclaimed the Cripple, in a voice suppressed by the fear of waking the sleeper, whilst his face grew crimson with rage; "but that I have no limb to reach thee, that taunt should be thy last. Here, Francis! thou and Pedro, muffle this traveller in his cassock and take him hence; when thou hast borne him a quarter of a mile in the woods, set him down to make his own way."

Before the sailors could obey this order, and whilst they hesitated to perform what seemed to them an

useless service of humanity, Cocklescraft entered the apartment. At the same moment Albert Verheyden, whose slumber had been disturbed by the clamour of conversation, now awoke, and, startled by the first impression which the inmates of the place made upon him, sprang to his feet, retreated to the wall and drew his sword.

"Where am I—and who are ye?" he exclaimed, with a confused perception of the persons around him, and of the spot he inhabited. "Your pardon, friends," he added, as gaining more self-possession, he turned the point of his weapon to the ground, and smiled; "I had an evil dream that awoke me. Will your goodness let me know—for I am a benighted traveller—what place this is, and to whom I am indebted for this shelter?"

"Ha, by St. Iago, thou art most welcome, Master Verheyden!" said the Skipper, as he recognised his enemy in the person who had made this appeal to the good-will of the company. 'Tis my house; make free of it, master! I did not hope for the honour of this courtesy;—thrice welcome! Thou hast been abroad to-day to seek the man who made bold to lodge a bullet in the brain of yon caster of nets, below St. Inigoe's; do I not guess well? Thou hast had most marvellous good luck; for first, before all the world, thou, his Lordship's Secretary, hast chanced upon the very murderer. What will thou do with him, Master Verheyden?"

"A misadventure has thrown me into the power of banditti," replied the Secretary, with quiet resignation. "I have naught to say. I know you daring

to do the purpose of a wicked will, and can hope for no mercy."

"You guess me right," replied Cocklescraft sternly. "I dare do what I *will* to do. Thee and thine, especially I hate—and have sworn against thy life. No to-morrow's sun rises on my Lord's dainty and darling minion. By the law of our brotherhood, thou diest this night, Albert Verheyden. John of Brazil, take him forth—and, by the lamp-light, discharge a brace of pistols into his heart. His heart—be sure of it! I would strike his heart:—it shall kill more than one," he muttered as he turned fiercely away.

"Dickon Cocklescraft," said Rob, with a gathering anger that was ill concealed under the show of calmness which he now assumed, "have I lost my authority under this roof—mine own roof, let me tell thee,—that thou venturest to usurp my right to ordain the fate of the rash fool who invades our secret? At peril of your future peace and thriving fortune, John of Brazil, dare to do the bidding of your Captain! Would'st have the evidences of his death rising up in judgment against us, in the blood thou spill'st? Thou art but an apprentice, Dickon, to thy devil's craft, and a halter will yet reward thee for thy folly. I will pronounce the doom of this intruding spy. Drown him! let the wide waters wash away all trace of the deed:—let the ravening shark devour him."

"Ha, ha!" ejaculated Cocklescraft, with a sneer, "thou hast a conceit in thy humanity, Rob! Do it—do it in thy own way; but, in the devil's name, be

quick about it. I have a merry sport for these lads to-night, and little time to lose:—so, despatch."

"Give me Francis and Pedro," said Rob, "and I will order the matter myself."

"Away then, about it!" said Cocklescraft; "we lose time in prating like women at this baby-play. You have commodities to go aboard to-night—look to it, John. Give a signal to the brigantine to send the yawl ashore—briskly, boys; we must work: so, to it!"

And in this strain of ordinary business occupation, the Skipper turned from the horrible fate of his victim with a careless indifference—almost forgetting, in the concern of shipping some contraband merchandise, (the rapine of his last voyage,) the dreadful tragedy which, at his instance, was now in a course of acting.

Albert, calm and silent, like the victim of a Pagan sacrifice, neither gave vent to the agony of his feelings in sighs, nor offered resistance to the savage hands that pinioned his arms. Under the direction of the Cripple, the two sailors conducted their captive towards the hut, Rob himself following with the coat of the Secretary thrown over his own shoulder.

The rain still poured steadily down, and the faint light of the moon had disappeared, leaving the scene in almost perfect darkness. Albert Verheyden, his arms bound with cords, moved at the bidding of his ruthless conductors, at a brisk and firm pace, along the beach, until the party arrived opposite the hut of the Cripple. They approached the door, which being thrown open, gave to their view the smouldering fire that still threw forth a glimmering ray from the hearth.

A pine fagot soon kindled up a blaze, and cast a broad, lurid light over the apartment. At Rob's command the prisoner was brought in and stripped of his doublet, his boots and his weapon, all which were taken in charge by the master of the hut. A deadly paleness was spread over the Secretary's face whilst these preparations were making: but his lip did not quiver, nor did his eye lose its lustre.

"Why not take my life at once? Why mock my spirit with this horrible delay?" he asked, in a tone that partook as much of anger as of grief. "I appeal to stones—to brutes, more senseless than stones! Holy martyrs, aid me in my extremity!" he added, with a subdued and resigned temper. "God will avenge this wrong."

"Why dost falter, knaves?" exclaimed Rob, when he saw the sailors retreat a pace and mutter inaudible whisperings to each other. "Ha, thou must be wrought, by thine accustomed devil, to this work. There, go to it: there are strong waters to aid thy lacking courage—drink your fill! I will help thee."

Rob now gave to the seamen a bottle, which they put alternately to their lips. "Fear it not, Pedro! Stint not, Francis! 'Tis an ugly job at best, and needs the countenance of a man's draught. Drink again!"

"Ay, bravely will I, like a Bloody Brother!" replied Pedro, making good his word by a second application of the bottle. "I have been on the Coast, Master Rob, with Mansvelt, before I ever saw Captain Cocklescraft."

"Ha!" said Francis, in a French accent, "and

wasn't Francois Le Grand at the taking of Maracaibo, and in the fight with the three Spanish galleons? Diavolo! give me the bottle!"

"Brave lads, both!" shouted Rob, with an attempt to laugh; "brave lads, and worthy! We shall be late with our work,—haste thee!"

"The necklace!—I had forgot the necklace!" said Pedro, with a somewhat thick utterance; and leaving the room for a moment, he returned with a large round stone, which was expertly enveloped in cords and fastened around the Secretary's neck.

"Now to the skiff, lads! get it ready upon the beach—see that thou hast the oars."

At this command the sailors went forth to make their preparations.

"In God's name, boy!" eagerly demanded the Cripple, the moment the seamen had left the room, "cans't swim? Answer quickly; I would save thy life."

"I can."

"Thanks for that word! Thou wilt sit beside me in the boat—I will cut these cords. When I extinguish my light, spring into the wave; make to this shore. You will find your weapons and your garments under the door-sill. These drunken knaves I will detain from pursuit. Make your way northward, along the beach. Four miles from here you will reach the dwelling of one Jarvis—you will find him friendly."

"All ready, Master Rob!" shouted one of the seamen, as he thrust his head within the door.

"Take more drink, Pedro—'tis a wet night," said Rob.

Whilst the sailor obeyed this command, the Cripple took up a billet of resinous pine, which he lighted at the fire, and, under the guidance of this flaming torch, Albert was led to the boat.

The two mariners took their places at the oars; the captive was seated alongside of the Cripple, who assumed the helm, and all things made ready for their eventful voyage. The surf ran high under the pressure of an easterly wind, which blew in upon this shore; and nothing was heard but the stunning sound of the surge, whose foam sparkled as it broke on the beach from the dark waste of waters of the bay. The torch streamed aloft in the wind, flinging its light full upon the faces of the sturdy oarsmen, and plainly enough disclosed to Rob the stupefying effect of their late debauch at the Chapel, redoubled as it was in the recent potations which had been supplied at the hut. Albert Verheyden, unable to account for the sudden interest which the Cripple had so hurriedly expressed in his fate, scarcely could persuade himself to believe in its sincerity. But still, like one in a dreadful hazard resolved to avail himself of every chance, he inclined his body towards his companion, anxiously waiting to find himself relieved of the strictures that bound his limbs. From suspense, doubt and almost despair, he was suddenly elevated to the most exhilarating hope, when he found the knife of the Cripple applied to sever the cord that suspended the weight to his neck, and, in almost the

same instant, to set his arms free. The boatmen were struggling to push the boat over the sand in which she was partially imbedded, and having got afloat waited the moment to go out upon the ebbing surf.

"Steady! strike together, and briskly!" said Rob, "You will bring home a lighter load than you take. There—sturdily—as we ride the wave! Ha, the fiend on that white cap! this salt sea is an unruly monster—it has quenched my light. Pull away,—we have shipped a hogshead of brine! A plague on thee for handling an oar! thou hast left me never a dry thread to my back:—mine eyes flash fire with this dripping sea. In the name of the wizard! are we not too light in our craft for such a heavy sea?"

"All free!" said Pedro. "A little salt water will do no harm: we have good space before us. Keep her head to it, Master Rob. You may throw the landlouper over, now. If the tide should wash him ashore, there's a berth to be found for him in the sand."

"Over with him!" said Francis; "I would not row a cable's length in so dark a night to drown a king."

"Ha! by my body, I believe that wave hath rid us of the spy before we were willing to part with him!" said Rob; "he is not in the boat—I can feel nothing of him around me. Thou hast better eyes than I, Francis: look under the seat. Seest thou the prisoner?"

"I see nothing here," replied the seaman.

"Nor I," added his comrade; "these landsmen have never a liking to a long voyage—ha, ha! Well,

he sleeps where no one will call to wake him in the morning. Put about, Master Rob!"

"I know not right hand from left—north from south, in this darkness," returned the Man of the Bowl, as he still kept the boat heading on her outward course.

"Down to leeward!" cried Pedro. "Dost not know when the wind is in your teeth?"

"Ay," responded Rob, "thou'rt a wise teacher, master frize-jacket! So, now for the surf again—another drenching! I am a mad-cap fool to be playing the boy, in my old days, with these storm-chickens. But, to your oars, lads! we must back to shore."

Some time was taken up in manœuvring the boat so as to bring her bow towards the shore, and a full half hour elapsed before the voyagers had again reached the hut.

As Rob made haste towards his dwelling, he heard footsteps approaching from the direction of the Chapel, and anxious to relieve his mind, on the instant, from the doubt whether the Secretary had been fortunate in his endeavour to reach the shore, he swung himself the more rapidly forward, and before he entered his door, thrust his arm beneath the sill to ascertain if the clothes, to which he had directed Albert's attention, were removed.

"Holy St. Romuald, my blessed patron, I thank thee!" he ejaculated, upon assuring himself that the articles deposited had been taken off; "and here, on this threshold, in the sincerity of a godly vow, I dedicate the remnant of a sinful life to penitence and prayer! Is it you, Master Cocklescraft?" he demand-

ed, confusedly, as the footstep he had heard now arrived at the gate of his enclosure. "A stormy night we have had for this foul play."

"Have you done it,—and well?" eagerly inquired the Skipper. "Hast given that saucy jack to the supper of the crabs? By my fellowship, I envy you, Robert Swale!—and would have chosen to do the deed myself, if it were not, that having made a miss in my encounter with him with swords, it might be taken cowardly in me to handle him in this fashion. I was glad, Rob, you took it upon yourself. Didst make a clear plunge of it? Did he pray for his life, ha? Oh, it was a rare chance that gave him to us this night! Tell me how he bore himself."

The sailors coming up at this moment, Rob was obliged to confess that neither he nor the oarsmen had seen the prisoner go overboard; and thereupon he related the extinguishment of his light, the heavy surf, and the subsequent missing of the victim.

"A weight was fastened around him?" sharply inquired the Skipper.

"It was."

"And he did not shuffle it off?—Art sure of it? A light there, Pedro! let me see the boat."

The light was brought, and the boat examined, and the stone which had been prepared to sink the body found lying under the stern-seat.

"Ten thousand devils!—he has escaped," roared Cocklescraft. "Fool that I was, to trust this matter to a deformed and unfurnished cripple!—how happened he to be so weakly bound and lightly watched,

that in such brief time he could release his arms and cast away this weight?"

Rob listened to the outpouring of the Skipper's wrath and impatience, with an unaccustomed calmness. Ordinarily his fretful and rebellious temper would have broken out, at such rebuke, into imprecation and defiance, and he would have spoken in a tone which would have made the leader of the pirate crew quail before him. There was, in the countenance and bearing of the misshapen tenant of the hut, an expression of command and harsh and fiery resolve, which alone might master the rough minds with whom he held his daily commerce; but there was, besides, a personal awe of him, derived from his secluded life and greater intelligence, approaching to the fear inspired by a supernatural being, which was sufficiently potent to disarm the hostility and secure the obedience of the credulous seamen who followed the fortunes of Cocklescraft. An answer of defiance and reproof hesitated on his tongue. His eye glistened like that of a basilisk, his lip quivered, and his nostril began to distend,—but the instant thought that it became him not at this moment to quarrel with the Skipper, and that he might only countervail the mischievous designs (as he was now resolved to do to the utmost of his power,) of this vengeful and merciless man, by the coolest watch upon his motions, changed his mood and prompted him to assume a milder tone.

"Thou must needs have a revel to-night, in the Chapel, Dickon," he said, with a laugh in which he could not entirely disguise his scorn; "and these

tarred monsters of thine have grown muddy-brained and thick-sighted; they have neglected to do their work of breath-stopping so featly, as thou hast taught them of old."

"Whither hath the slave fled?" exclaimed Cockles-craft, as they returned to the hut. "Lurks he not in the bush,—may he not yet be followed and re-taken?"

"Oh, truly!" replied the Cripple; "it is the nature of an escaped captive to lurk around his prison: an eaglet that hath broken his cage will fret against the wires for admittance—the wolf will dally upon the footstep of the hunter. When thou can'st believe these, Dickon, thou mayst hope to find the prisoner still prowling in the neighbourhood of the Chapel."

"The curse of the Brethren of the Coast upon him! By St. Iago—I will have my vengeance yet! Rob, as the fox hath scaped from your hand, I may claim a service of you. I shall set forth instantly for St. Mary's, with a dozen of my picked men. I have doings on foot, old sinner, that shall delight thee in the telling. Mischief, mischief, Master Rob of the Trencher! which I shall keep secret until it be done. I would put such of my crew as remain behind—barely enough to sail the brigantine—under your command. You will go aboard and direct her to an anchorage on the outer side of the Heron Islands nearest the mouth of St. George's river. There will I join you soon after daylight. Oh! but his Lordship's city shall ring with wailing at my leave-taking! What say'st thou, Rob? Wilt go aboard?"

"When dost thou set forth?" inquired Rob.

"Now, on the instant—as soon as I may gather my cut-throats in the yawl."

"And at what hour shall the brigantine sail?"

"By two o' the clock, at latest, as much sooner as you choose."

"Ha, ha! Thou wilt make me a limb to help thy deviltry. Well, so be it, Dickon!" said the Cripple, after a moment's pondering over the proposal. "I will take on the office of Skipper for the nonce, as thou takest on thy more accustomed garb of an incarnate devil."

"'Tis agreed," cried Cocklescraft, turning around to leave the cabin; "behind the first of the Heron Islands, Master Rob—St. George's, I think it is called—remember! And have a caution that, before you cast anchor, you have got a position from which the brigantine may not be observed from the town."

"Ay, truly," returned the Cripple, nodding his head and smiling in derision, as the Skipper departed and closed the door after him—"I will take good care that the brigantine be not observed from the town!"

It was now an hour past midnight. Cocklescraft hurried to the Black House where he found his crew awaiting his return. Francis and Pedro were directed to take Rob on board of the brigantine, and with two other seamen, who were appointed to go before them, to await the Cripple's orders. The rest of the crew, amounting to twelve men, were armed with cutlasses, pikes and pistols, and, under the immediate command of Cocklescraft, took possession

of the yawl. In brief space, the Captain himself stepped on board. With the turn of the night the rain began to abate; the wind was veering round westwardly, and appearances seemed to indicate a change of weather before morning.

The word being given, the boat was shoved off from the strand; and the regular, sturdy and rapid stroke of the oar was heard, long after she was lost to view, as she laid her course towards Cape Look-Out.

Soon after this, Francis and Pedro knocked at the door of Rob's cabin. "We are ready to put you on board of the Escalfador, Master Swale," said the first, just thrusting his capped head and frize-clad shoulders into the hut.

"I am with you, honest gentlemen," returned the Cripple, as he came forth and followed them to the boat.

"Up with your anchor," cried out Rob, when he found himself on the deck of the brigantine. "Pedro, make what sail thou think'st best, and stand out into the bay."

In less than half an hour the sailor waited on his new captain for orders. "We have a fair berth up and down, master. Whither do we steer?"

"To the Patuxent," replied Rob.

"Ay, ay—our course is northward." And the brig was soon under easy sail with the wind abeam, as it blew moderately from the west, with here and there a star twinkling through the breaking clouds, as she made her way towards the headlands of the Patuxent.

CHAPTER XIII.

Both child and nurse are fast asleep
And closed is every flower,
And winking tapers faintly peep,
High from my lady's bower.
Bewildered hinds with shortened ken,
Shrink on their murky way;
Up rouse ye then, my merry men,
It is our op'ning day.

JOANNA BAILLIE.

COCKLESCRAFT had not communicated to his men the exact nature of the expedition in which they had embarked. They were only aware that their leader had conceived a deep and mortal hatred to certain individuals in the port; that he had fled from it as an outlaw; and that their services were required in some daring enterprise which was designed to inflict chastisement upon his enemies: they cared to know no more. Bred to rapine and aggression, knowing no law but the law of their own fraternity; unpitying and unsparing in their violence; the greater portion of them strangers to the port,—for Cocklescraft had recruited more than half of his band amongst the islands of the Gulf, on his last voyage—these desperate men were ready to do the behests of their

chief in any act of outrage to which he might command them.

In an hour they had doubled Cape Look-Out and were making dextrous speed up the Potomac. The refreshing breeze gradually swept away the clouds and whistled, as it came directly a head upon the course of the voyagers; the moon was just sinking below the horizon and the stars shone forth through a crisp and frosty atmosphere: the waving forest murmured with a rushing sound from the land; the billows of the wide estuary of the river, under the impulse of the suddenly-changed wind, came in conflict, with a sharp concussion that sometimes gave forth a note resembling the scream of the human voice: no friendly light was seen glimmering from the shore nor from wandering craft upon the river: the marauders were alone upon the water, plying the lusty stroke to give a more fatal speed to their purpose of crime, and the hour was beguiled with ribald jests and obscene ballads, with wild and drunken laughter, and the meditation of horrid outrage.

Cocklescraft himself was moody and silent. His thoughts dwelt upon the past scenes of the night, and upon his present long-revolved purpose, which, during the last twenty-four hours, scarce left him leisure to think of other matters. Even the accidental capture of his enemy at the Chapel, and the escape of that enemy from the fate allotted to him, lost their power to move him, whilst he gloated upon the cherished design of this night.

In another hour the boat had weathered the head-

land at the mouth of St. Mary's river. As the Skipper entered the river the first of the Heron islands lay upon his left, and he anxiously surveyed the localities, to regulate the course of his retreat to his brigantine, which by his order was to be in waiting for him abreast the outer shore. "The blessed sun," he muttered to himself—"shall light me with his first rays to-morrow, on my seaward track, with my vengeance satisfied to the last scruple. Ay, by St. Iago," he added, as he shook his clenched hand, and gnashed his teeth with the energy of his resolve,—"to the last doit of the debt!"

Another interval of silent labour at the oar, and the dim light in the windows of the Chapel attached to the House of St. Inigoe's, yet far off, upon the narrow strip of land which jutted entirely across the direct line of the boat's course, as she hugged the shore, showed the mariners that some one of the officials of the house was at the service of early matins on the vigil of the Feast of All Souls; and their familiarity with the watches of the night apprised them, that the hour approached four of the morning.

And now the creek of St. Inigoe's is opened upon their view; and on the further bank, the house of the Rose Croft, with its embowering trees, is distinctly traced against the clear starlit sky. A solitary taper glimmering through an upper window, denotes a lady's bower, where, under the protection of the friendly ray, Blanche Warden, perchance, reposes in innocent slumber,—her fancy sporting in

dreams of him who day and night lives in her thoughts.

This reflection flashed across the brain of Cockles-craft as he directed the head of the boat into the creek.

"Pull, with a long sweep and a quick," he said in a low but stern voice. "These watch dogs of the fort may catch a glimpse of us." Then having advanced far enough to interpose the bluff bank of the Rose Croft between him and the fort, he commanded the men to cease rowing, whilst they muffled their oars.

"Not a word above your breath," he now added in giving the orders which were to guide his followers through the enterprise for which they had been brought hither. "Listen to me: we land under yonder bank—creep in silence to the dwelling you see above, and pluck from her bed the fairest damsel of this Western world. Mark me, comrades,—you have sacked towns and spoiled many an humble roof; you have torn children from the breasts of their mothers, and wives from the arms of their husbands; you have dragged maidens from the inmost chambers of their dwelling and laughed at their prayers for safety,—and you have rioted over all, with the free license of the Bloody Brothers—but take it to your souls this night, that if, in the assault of yonder house, one unnecessary blow be struck, a war cry be raised or deed of violence done, the man who offends dies by my hand. And further, when the maiden is brought into your presence let no rude speech assail her ear. I go to seek a bride, not to

plunder; and I command you all, on the duty you owe your leader, as Brethren of the Coast, that you do her all honour as mistress of the Escalfador. My sweetest revenge,"—he muttered without intending to be heard by the crew—"is to marry the worshipful Collector's daughter without his leave—or her own, by St. Iago! The rose shall consort with the sea nettle, Anthony Warden!—though it be not to your liking. Do ye heed me, messmates? Roche del Carmine, to you I look to see this order enforced!"

"If it be but the taking of a single damsel," murmured Roche, "it was hardly worth leaving the warm fire and the bottle of the Chapel. Ha! it will be a story to tell in the Keys that our last frolic in St. Mary's was at the Captain's wedding!"

"Dost thou prate, sirrah?" demanded Cocklescraft. "By my sword, I am in earnest in what I say—I will shoot down the man that disobeys my order."

"I will answer for the crew," said Roche de Carmine; "the lady shall be handled as gently as a child in the arms of its nurse."

"Ay," responded several of the sailors; "the Captain shall not complain of us."

The oars were muffled and the boat was once more in full progress towards her destination. A few minutes sufficed to bring the voyagers to the small wharf beneath the cliff of the Rose Croft, and in a moment all were ashore, except a single mariner who was left to guard the boat.

"Peace!" whispered Cocklescraft; "peace with

that rattling of pikes. Form under the bank and remain quiet until I ascend and examine the place."

The leader now crept, with noiseless footstep, up the pathway which terminated upon the plain in front of the dwelling. He walked across the lawn, by the very spot where, scarce a fortnight gone by, he had had his hostile interview with Albert Verheyden. The little rustic temple of St. Therese yet stood, with its faded foliage, upon the grass-plot: the flower stands were still there, although the plants were removed to their shelter from the frost: nothing met the eye of the foul-purposed rover but the images of content and innocence which marked the abode of a happy family: even the house dog, who at first growled as with show of battle, changed his threat into greeting as the Skipper proffered his hand and claimed acquaintance. The tokens of confiding security were all around him, and as he recalled the last time he had visited this place, and remembered the incidents of the festival of St. Therese—the maiden's coldness, her father's disdain, and the Secretary's favour, he laughed with the thought of the mastery he now held over the fate of the household. He could scarcely withdraw himself from the luxury of his present rumination, but wandered to and fro in front of the dwelling,—then made a circuit around it, and, returning again to the front, stood beneath the window through which the feeble taper shone with that steady but subdued ray which of itself was a symbol of the deep repose of the tenant of the chamber.

"I could wake thee, lady gay," he said, "with as blithe a serenade as ever tuned thy dream to plea-

sant measures—but that I lack the instrument. And though I be not the cavalier of thy fancy, Blanche Warden, pretty Rose of St. Mary's,—yet, by my soul, I love thee well enough to put myself to some pains to teach thee how thou shalt love me. We dance together on the green wave to-morrow, lass! —little as you dream of such merriment now. And as I would not have thy blushes seen, I must e'en lead thee forth before the day."

With this sally, he returned to his comrades, and commanded them to ascend the bank. Three men were detached around the house to keep a look-out, and the other eight, following Cocklescraft himself, approached the hall door.

"What, ho! Fire, thieves, robbers!" shouted Cocklescraft, aided, in raising a clamour, by his men, at the same time striking loudly with the butt of a pike against the door. "Rouse ye, rouse ye, or you will have a house about your ears! Fire, Master Warden, thieves, rovers and savages!"

A scream was first heard in the chamber from the window of which the light had been seen—and Cocklescraft putting his hand to his ear, laughed as he recognised the voice of the maiden.

"By our lady," he said—"our gentle mistress sings well!"

In the next instant a window was thrown open on the opposite side of the house, and the figure of Anthony Warden, in his night gown, with a candle in his hand, was partially thrust out, whilst he exclaimed—

"What is this pother? Who comes at this hour

to alarm the family? Who are ye, I say, that seek to disturb the rest of my household with your villainous shoutings?"

"Answer him, Roche," whispered Cocklescraft; "I dare not."

"Open your doors, Collector," said Roche; "we have business with you."

"Get you hence, drunken knaves!" returned Mr. Warden. "I will call my servants and drive you off the ground."

"By my hand, if you do not open your doors, Master Warden," said Cocklescraft, finding that he could not trust the conduct of the assault to his mate, "we will break them open, and quickly——"

"Who are you that speak so saucily?" demanded the Collector.

"Richard Cocklescraft—an old friend, Master Anthony, who being about to put to sea, would make his last visit to the officer of the Port. Throw wide your doors and let us in, old man, or it may be the worse for thy grey hairs."

"Ho, Michael Mossbank, Nicholas, Tomkin!" shouted Mr. Warden, as he withdrew his head from the window; "up, get up—bring me my blunderbuss—we are beset—stir yourselves, my trusty fellows!"

The house was now lighted in various parts, and every one was on foot. Blanche at the first summons sprang from her bed, and ran to her sister Alice, screaming in a paroxysm of alarm; but whilst the invaders parleyed with her father, she had sufficiently resumed her self-possession to make a hasty toilet, and then to repair to the protection of Mr.

Warden's presence. The old man, not coolly—for he was wrought into excessive rage—but with all necessary discretion and forecast, made his arrangements for the coming struggle. Two or three servants had gathered around him, as he descended the staircase to meet the assailants who were still battering at the door; and it was with difficulty that he could shake off the females, who clung around his step with piteous intreaties that he would not venture into collision with the band who, it was now evident, must, in a few moments, make good their entrance into the house.

"Leave me, daughters—get thee back to thy chamber," he cried, as he forced his way through their feeble impediment, with a blunderbuss in his hand, and, followed by the servants, took a station midway in the hall, whence he was able to direct his defence to either the front or the rear.

The precautions to which the inhabitants of the province were accustomed to resort for the purpose of guarding their dwellings against the attacks of the Indians, had rendered, in fact, every house almost a castle, and it was no easy matter, without the proper tools, to force an admission against the will of the owner. The stubborn character of the defences of Mr. Warden's dwelling detained the assailants longer than they expected, and gave time to the small garrison within to take all measures for guarding themselves that the condition of the house afforded.

The door at length yielded to the vigour of the attack, and as it flew wide open, the veteran master of the mansion stood with dauntless front, in full view

of the eager seamen;—in the same instant his piece was discharged with such effect, that the two foremost men reeled and fell across the threshold.

"Give me thy gun, Michael," he exclaimed, as he turned to the gardener and seized the long Spanish fowling-piece with which my reader has already had some acquaintance; "I will teach these ruffians good manners! Back knaves!—unhand me, villains!—Michael, Nicholas!"

"Stay that blow, coward!" roared Cocklescraft at the height of his voice, in the exertion of his full command over the crew, as they had, immediately upon receiving the Collector's fire, rushed forward and overcome the old man by the press of numbers,—the servants having fled at this onset. "Strike him, and you shall fall by my own sword!" he continued, as with his cutlass he turned aside the pike of a seaman who had aimed it at the Collector's breast. "Is it for men to war against grey hairs?"——

"Save my father—oh God, spare his life!" screamed Blanche, as she now sprang, wild with terror, half way down the stair. "Men of blood, have mercy on his age!—he is old—too old to do you harm. Oh, save him!"

"By the blessed Virgin, gentle mistress, I swear not one hair upon his head shall suffer harm,—for thy sake, dainty lady, if for no other!" exclaimed Cocklescraft, as with one bound he placed himself beside the maiden; and raising her aloft on his arm, he leaped back to the hall and thence out upon the lawn. "Follow me, comrades!" he shouted, as he bore the

screaming maiden stoutly on his shoulder down the bank, and laid her senseless upon the seat of the boat. Here he threw his cloak over her person, and summoned his men immediately to their posts,—having taken care to bring away the two wounded seamen.—The boat was about to be shoved off from the wharf, when the figure of a female was descried coming, at a rapid flight, from the direction of the dwelling, and uttering a shrill note of lamentation, as she begged them to stop:

"For the love of God, leave her behind! Oh, have pity, good men, and do not tear away the Collector's daughter, our young mistress! Christian men, spare her to us! She will die of cold—she will perish on the water—her blood will be on your heads!"

"Thou 'rt a good nurse, Mistress Coldcale," said the Skipper with a sportive tone which mocked the distress of the sufferers; "and as our queen will want an attendant, thou shalt even go with us. Put the old woman aboard, comrades!" he added, speaking to some of the men, who, almost before the housekeeper could utter the shriek which now rose from her lips, was lifted over half a dozen heads, and deposited beside her young lady.

"Cheerily, now to your oars!" shouted Cockle-scraft, exulting in the success of his inroad. "Lay your sinews to it, lads, until we get clear of the creek, and then up with your sail!—we have a fair wind and a merry voyage before us. Speed thee! I scent the coming dawn."

Almost in as brief space as we have taken to re-

late it, the boat had shot forth into the middle of the creek, and now glided over the waters like an imp of darkness flying homeward to his ocean cave freighted with the spoils of some evil errand.

CHAPTER XIV.

And hurry skurry, forth they go,
Unheeding wet or dry;
And horse and rider snort and blow,
And sparkling pebbles fly.

LEONORA.

ALBERT VERHEYDEN, at the appointed signal from the Cripple, had sprung into the surf, at the moment when it broke with its greatest violence against the bow of the boat, and, almost without an effort, was swept in upon the hard beach. His first motion, on gaining his breath, was to hasten to the hut, seize the clothes that had been stripped from him, as well as his weapons, and to speed, at the full measure of his strength,—now animated by his mysterious and almost miraculous deliverance,—northwardly along the margin of the bay; keeping sufficiently remote from it, however, to screen himself by the thickets, which grew a short distance from the water's edge, from detection by those who might, perchance, be on the watch to observe his course. His limbs were chilled, and it was only by violent and unintermitted motion that he was able to preserve himself from the dangerous consequences which were likely to attend his exposure. By degrees, exercise threw a glow

over his frame, and he soon found himself recovering his suppleness of limb and power of enduring the toilsome walk by which he laboured to reach the friendly shelter indicated by Rob's hurried instruction in the hut. After what seemed a progress of at least twice the space in which he was told he should find the dwelling of Jarvis, he was, at length, greeted with the cheerful sight of an humble homestead, seated so near the shore that the fence, which bounded the curtilage of the dwelling, actually bordered upon the confines of the tide-mark. He staid not to consider how he were best to claim admittance, but walked at once to the door and rapped loudly, as a distressed man is apt to feel it his right to do in a Christian land.

"I pray you, good people, open your door to me," he said; "rise, Master Jarvis, and admit a friend. Rise, kind sir: in the name of charity, I intreat the shelter of your roof."

In a moment the door was ajar, and a sleepy voice heard from within challenging the comer—

"Who are you that strays so late, in so lonely a region?"

"A friend, good Master Jarvis."

"Is it shipwreck?" inquired the master of the house, as he opened the door and admitted the wanderer. "Stand a moment, sir, until I get you a light. Are you alone?"

Before an answer could be given to either of these queries, the questioner had departed, and in a few moments returned with a candle, whose light disclosed to the Secretary a comfortable family room,

furnished according to the primitive but useful fashion of a substantial tiller of the soil of that era. It took but little time for Albert to rehearse the eventful story of the night, and his narrative was answered with a kindness that gave him assurance of being now under the protection of a friend. The good man of the house seeing that nothing was so necessary to his guest as sleep, detained him no longer than was requisite to enable his dame to prepare a couch, to which the Secretary, upon the housewife's summons, eagerly repaired, and soon turned his sufferings to a happy account, as, in self-felicitation at his escape, and in rendering thanks to God for the mercy that had raised him up a friend in his extreme need, he sank into sweet oblivion of all the past.

At the dawn of day, he rose refreshed and invigorated, and, being provided with a horse by the hospitable farmer, staid only to express his gratitude to his host for the favours he had received, and then, with as much expedition as he could command, pricked onward to the town.

The rising sun gilded the chimney-tops of the dwelling of the Rose Croft, as the Secretary turned a delighted eye upon that quiet scene, whilst he descended from the distant hill which gave him a glimpse of, what he deemed, that happy homestead, through the embowering trees. The atmosphere was instinct with a keen and bracing healthfulness which gave a cheerful tone to the feeling of all animated nature. As Albert stood in his stirrups and looked around him, it was with an unwonted gladness that he contemplated his near advance to his

home; and he had already resolved that his first moments, after refitting his disordered person, should be spent in a visit to the mistress of his heart, to whom, with an impassioned delight natural to the romance of his mind, he hoped to tell his perilous and startling adventure.

The roofs and bowers of the Rose Croft sank from his view, as he hastened onward; and he, at length, found himself on the skirts of the little city. There were ominous gatherings of the burghers in the street; and the speakers shook their heads, and seemed to the Secretary to converse with a mysterious gravity:

"They have heard," he said to himself, "of my mischance in losing my way, and are fancying that I have encountered the Indians. No,—they see me riding here, yet no one comes to greet me:—there are other tidings in the wind."

And with this conclusion, anxious to know what had occasioned this early commotion in the little mart of news, he pressed forward to the Proprietary mansion.

An hour before the arrival of the Secretary, Rob of the Bowl, mounted on a sober-paced horse,—his thighs grasping the saddle with more security than one might expect from his diminished quantity of limb, his trencher hanging by a strap like a huge shield at his back, (this being his customary mode of travel when his occasions required him to assume the equestrian,) entered the town. He had run the Escalfador into the little inlet of Mattapany, just inside the Patuxent, where he left her under the guns of the

Fort which the Proprietary maintained at this post; and repairing immediately on shore, he communicated to the commander of the garrison the circumstances which induced his visit, requesting that the brigantine should be detained at her present mooring until his Lordship's pleasure might be known. Then, having procured a horse, he set forth, long before day-light threw its flush upon the eastern sky, upon his journey to St. Mary's, not doubting to hear, upon his arrival there, a story of outrage (though against whom or how perpetrated he could not guess) done by the band of the Wizard's Chapel. Without stopping to notice the wondering gaze of the townsfolk at the strange, though not altogether unfamiliar spectacle he exhibited to them, he made his way directly to the dwelling of father Pierre.

By the aid of the good father himself, he was dismounted from his horse and straightway conducted into the study of the churchman.

"You have reason to be amazed at this early visit, reverend father," he said, "but my errand will brook no ceremony."

"Thou comest to tell somewhat of the ruffians," hastily answered father Pierre, with a look and tone of sorrow, which informed the Cripple, at the outset, that some deed of horror had already been done,—"who last night violated the sanctuary of the worthy Collector's roof, and stole away his daughter——"

"Hah!" exclaimed Rob, kindling with sudden wonder; "was that the drift of Dickon Cocklescraft's venture! He has stolen the damsel? Viper! hell-

hound! I heard it not, holy father: but I guessed no less an outrage. I have hastened hither, faster than these crippled limbs are wont to travel, to tell thee where the robber may be found. I knew his purpose of mischief, though not against whom it tended—ha, ha, ha! I have baulked him! I have baulked him!"

"Speak, old man, more coherently: we are lost in doubt, and overcome with grief,—say, where has the ravisher fled?"

"To the Heron islands, at the mouth of the river. There he hopes to find his brigantine—but I have cheated him, father Pierre! Lose no time—but set pursuit on foot."

"The town is wild with conjecture," returned the priest; "Master Warden's servants have told the dreadful tale: but whither to search, no one yet has told. Come instantly with me to the Proprietary's. He who can point out the path of rescue will be a welcome guest."

The priest lost no time in causing Rob to be again set in his saddle; and walking beside the horse across the plain which separated the dwelling of the Proprietary from the city, father Pierre soon halted with his companion at the door.

Previous to the arrival of the Cripple, and afterwards, during the conference between him and the Proprietary, in which measures were debated for the pursuit of the pirates, the excitement of the inhabitants of St. Mary's was aroused to the most intense agitation. The tidings brought from the Rose Croft had awakened the town at the dawn of day, and rumour told in every dwelling the sad history of the

Skipper's onslaught. The fate of Blanche was bewailed by all with bitter lamentation. Old and young grew frantic at the thought of a delicate and defenceless maiden, torn from her parent bower, in the dead of the night, and abandoned to the custody of miscreants, in whose bosoms not one sentiment of pity or remorse mitigated the fury of their brutal passions; and they uttered deep imprecations as they dwelt upon the dreadful fate which had befallen their cherished favourite, the Rose of St. Mary's. All were astir to do something for her rescue, yet none seemed to know what was proper to be done. The women wrung their hands and wept, running wildly from place to place; the elder burghers conversed in doubting and dilatory consultations; and the young men of the Port vented their anger in loud cries for vengeance against the perpetrators of the outrage, ——suggesting as many plans of pursuit as there were varying rumours of the retreat of the invaders, and calling loudly to be led into immediate action.

"The Olive Branch did not slip off so quietly on a harmless flight," said Nicholas Verbrack, the lieutenant of the fort, as he stood in the midst of some eight or ten companions, on a bluff bank which, near the middle of the town, gave a view of the whole extent of the river. "I ever thought that there was something too saucy both in the craft and in her Skipper, to have either of them accounted honest dealers in the Port."

"Honest dealers!" exclaimed Master Wiseman,—— one of the five aldermen who were elected every two years to preserve the corporate franchise of

the city, and who contrived to make up for the want of official duty by a redundancy of official importance; "Honest dealers, forsooth! That fellow Cocklescraft hath ever been under the suspicion of the board. We have noted him, masters: but what could we do when his Lordship hath ever been personally present in the city, and hath, I may say, encouraged the fellow as a trader,—because, forsooth, his custom helped to fill the exchequer of the province. Morals before money has always been my song; but it is preaching to a degenerate age—what have we to expect?"

"And the women," added Peregrine Cadger, "the women ran away with the man's wits. Why, mark you, sirs—what man, I would ask, but would grow bold and freakish,—ay, and wicked,—who has wife, maid, and widow ever at his heels, singing and saying all manner of flatteries, till, at last, one would think they had no other note."

"Oh, but it was horrible,—most aggravating and miserable,—this taking off!" groaned Willy, the fiddler. "Proudly and gladly would I have felt to be taken in her stead! I would suffer every misfortune,—"

"And the worst of it is, Master Willy," interrupted Wise Watkin, "they have taken Mistress Bridget Coldcale—that's a loss to the province:—I should not lie if I said to the whole town."

"Why stand prating and grieving like gossips at a funeral," said John Firebrace, the smith, "whilst all the time the rascal thieves are putting more land and water between them and us. I think their worships

of the council are somewhat tedious over the matter; they talk longer than is necessary,—or else that old crop-limbed, vinegar-face, Rob of the Bowl, hath more to tell, than commonly it is his habit. It is special matter that has brought him to the Port this morning. He knows more devil's-dealing than it pleases him, at all times, to let his neighbour hear. Yonder rides Master Verheyden, the Secretary," he added, as Albert now appeared at a distance directing his course towards the mansion of the Proprietary; "he may hasten matters. I would that they would put us in the way of doing something to save our poor young lady from the jaws of these sharks!"

The smith had scarcely ceased speaking when Captain Dauntrees was seen coming towards the group. Whilst he was yet some fifty paces off, he called out to the Lieutenant,—

"Master Verbrack,—quickly get thee to the fort, and march me instantly twenty men down to the quay. See that they be provided, Lieutenant, with all things necessary for service. Lose no time; but away."

The Lieutenant instantly departed, and the Captain approaching the assemblage, continued,—

"John Firebrace, get thy horse, man, and thy weapon. Colonel Talbot rides down the opposite bank of the river, with a score of good fellows at his heels. He counts upon you and your friends. Meet him quickly on the common behind the Town House."

These orders, hastily given, separated the company; and every one now hied towards the places appointed for these gatherings.

Already Colonel Talbot was on horseback collecting some of the more active young men of the town: and in an incredibly brief space—for in truth most of them were expecting the summons—a troop of some twenty were assembled, ready to follow wherever he should command. Amongst these were Arnold de la Grange and old Pamesack, both equipped and mounted after their accustomed fashion, in a manner that might have provoked a smile from the furred, and laced, and feathered cavalry of more orderly armies, but which, we may venture to believe, was quite as effective as a more gaudy furniture. Last in this marshaled array, came Albert Verheyden, pale, breathless, and almost frenzied with the narrative he had just heard of the disasters of the night. He staid at the mansion but long enough to substitute a more active horse for the clumsy animal on which he had made his journey to the town; and then hastened to join the party who were about to be ferried across the river, and to scour the country along the opposite shore.

Meantime the musqueteers arrived at the quay, where two barges being in readiness, the men were separated into equal divisions, and, very soon after sunrise, were embarked under the respective charge of Dauntrees and the Lieutenant, who, with all expedition, shaped their course towards the islands at the mouth of the river.

Talbot despatched a half dozen of the party to scour the shore of the Potomac below St. Inigoe's: the rest, under his own command, and attended by Albert, were transported to the opposite side of St.

Mary's river, by every boat that could be mustered for such a service: and being now collected on the further bank, sprang forward, at the orders of their leader, on their career of duty, with an alacrity which showed how deeply they took to heart the outrage which it was now their purpose to chastise.

CHAPTER XV.

She turned her right and round about,
And she swore by the mold,
"I would not be your love," said she
"For that church full of gold."

He turned him right and round about,
And he swore by the mass,
Says—"lady, ye my love shall be,
And gold ye shall have less."

OLD BALLAD.

WHEN Cocklescraft and his crew had again doubled the point of St. Inigoe's, on their retreat, the sail of the yawl was spread before the breeze, and she skimmed the waves like a bird of the sea. Blanche had yet scarcely shown signs of animation, except in the low and smothered moan that escaped from beneath the folds of the cloak which, with an officious care, the leader of the pirate gang had disposed for the protection of her person from the cold. Beside her crouched the housekeeper, sobbing and sighing and uttering ejaculations of alarm—one moment for her own fate—at the next, for the lot of her young lady,—and at intervals shrieking with a causeless terror, as the little bark, bending to the wind, dipped the end of her sail into the wave.

The seamen, now released from the oars, were called to the care of their bleeding comrades. Roche del Carmine, the mate, was already dead, and the other writhed in the torments of an unstaunched wound. The band were too familiar with the accidents of war to be much moved by the fate of their companions, and accordingly, after applying a bandage to the hurt of the living man, and merely disposing the body of the dead one in a position least inconvenient to themselves, they assumed that gleesome indifference to the hazards of their condition, which has ever been a characteristic trait of the hardened and reckless temper engendered by the discipline of the Buccaneer's life.

The beams of the sun had begun to bicker on the face of the waters when the fugitives reached the island of St. George's, the first of those few scattered islands in the Potomac which passed under the general name of the Heron Islands. During this brief voyage, Cocklescraft had in vain endeavoured to soothe the maiden with kind words and protestations that no harm should befall her. He took her cold hand and it quivered in his grasp; and when he released it, it fell lifeless back upon her bosom: he laid his palm upon her brow, and a clammy moisture bespoke the agony that wrung it.

"Dame," he said, addressing Mistress Coldcale; "thou art better skilled than I, in these woman qualms,—look to thy lady, and tell me of what she may stand in need. Thou shalt take her presently on board of the brigantine, and the whole vessel, if she require it, shall be given up to her comfort."

"She stands in need of her father's house," replied the dame, with more spirit than she might have been thought, from her previous fright, to possess. "She stands in need of friendly faces and kind hearts:—her soul is bowed down by misery. She will never open her eyes again, never, never—unless it be to look upon the friends from whom you have stole her. Oh, Master Cocklescraft—you have broken bread under her father's roof and have sat in the warmth of his fireside—his old eyes have looked kindly upon you, and he has spoken words of welcome that have gone to your heart with a blessing in the very sound of them:—how can you heap torments on the head of his child? In sorrow and wailing have you borne her away, and she will quickly wither in your hand:—you have stolen a flower that dies in the cropping. And oh, her grey-haired father!—with a broken heart, you have cast him down to the tomb."

"By St. Mary, woman, but I honour, love and cherish the maid!" returned Cocklescraft. "Have I not loved her long, as never father loved her,—thought of her on the wide waters of the ocean, under every sun;—dreamed of her night after night, in many a weary voyage;—borne her image before me in storm and battle, in the chase and in the flight, beneath the stars in the dead hour of midnight, and at the feast at high noon? Have I not made honourable petition for her, from her father—and been refused with scorn and foul insult? And have I not now, at last, entrapped her as gently as she doth the winter bird that seeks a crumb upon her window sill? By my faith, fairly have I won her, and proud-

ly will I wear her, dame! Her father!—I owe him nothing for his kindly greeting and warm fireside, and breaking of bread: he hath paid himself by his disdain and mockery of my suit. Have I not there," he added, speaking with an angry vehemence and pointing towards the bow of the boat—"given the life-blood of two of my best and bravest comrades to the old man's wrath,—and yet did I not myself turn aside the blow that would have laid him upon the floor of his own hall?"

"Better that he had so fallen," replied the dame, "than live to witness what his old eyes saw last night. Better that he died outright, than live to lose his child."

"Be silent, woman," exclaimed the Skipper, "if thou canst not give me fairer speech. When this anger is gone, and the maiden is more resigned, I will speak to you—not now. To your oars, good fellows," he said in a calmer tone to the seamen, as with the rising sun the breeze had fallen away and the sail flapped loosely against the mast. "We must pass through this narrow strait to the opposite side of the islands:—we shall find the brigantine there at anchor."

A confined and crooked channel, scarce above a pistol shot wide from shore to shore, divided the two islands immediately across the mouth of St. Mary's river, and afforded a passage for a light boat between. These islands, thickly timbered to the water's edge, effectually prevented, by their forest screen, the voyager along the inner shore from discerning the largest vessel which might be in the river beyond.

It was, therefore, with undoubting confidence in the certainty of finding the Escalfador at her appointed ground, that the leader of these rude Argonauts commanded his men to labour at the oar whilst they shot through the strait I have described.

When they emerged upon the open river, on the outer side of the islands, the sun, looming through the thick autumnal haze, shot his fiery beam over the broad sheet of water, without disclosing to the anxiously-searching eye of Cocklescraft trace of brig or boat or sail of any kind. His vision, however, was circumscribed within a narrow horizon;—for the mist which, at this season, broods over the landscape,—the forerunner of a genial day—scarce brought within the compass of his observation the nearer points of the mainland, and effectually shut out all more distant objects;—a circumstance which, however embarrassing to his present inspection, had so far been favourable to his escape from the prying eye of the sentinel on the look-out station of the Fort of St. Mary's.

"Ha!—twice have I been fooled by that old dotard of St. Jerome's," he peevishly murmured, when, after straining his sight in every direction, he became aware that the brigantine was no where to be seen; "he hath overslept himself, forsooth,—or must stay to mumble a paternoster, or tell his beads. Why did I trust a laggard with this enterprise! But that I spoke somewhat hastily and with temper to him last night, and would not have his displeasure, I would have seen him gibbeted e'er I would have given the brigantine into his charge. Yet he is

trusty,—and hath a devil's spice in him that fits him somewhat for such an outcome, too. He will be here anon;—the wind has left him,—and what he had was in his teeth: the Escalfador makes not such way as may keep pace with my longings. Patience for a season,—and meantime we will land on the island, comrades, and wait for our crippled admiral."

With this intimation he steered directly upon the beach. "John of Brasil," he continued; "use your time to scoop a grave for our comrade Roche, and see him bestowed with such honour as belongs to a Brother of the Coast. Joseph, thou and a messmate will kindle a fire under yonder oak—these women are frozen into a dead silence. Harry Skelton, get to the lower end of the island, and there keep watch upon the river, and report every thing that comes in sight. Now, Mistress Bridget, thou and our lady Blanche shall have sway over the whole island;—the lady shall be an empress and thou her maid of honour. See, how quickly preferment comes! You have your liberty, pretty Rose of St. Mary's—so cheer up, and make a fair use of it."

To this ill-timed jocularity the maiden yielded no reply; and the Skipper believing that, upon being left alone with Mistress Coldcale, she would perhaps relent into a more tractable tone of feeling, quitted the boat with the seamen who had gone to execute his several orders, and thus abandoned the two females to themselves.

"Alack, alack!" sobbed Blanche, as she raised her head and then dropped it on the lap of the house-

keeper; "dear Bridget, what will become of us? I shall die, I shall die!—my poor father!"

"Poor indeed, mistress," replied the dame. "If we are not rescued, he will never hold up his head after the loss of his child. Oh, if our townspeople would but follow,—as I trust in the saints they will!"

"Is there a chance of it," exclaimed Blanche, "good Bridget, is there a chance of it?"

"Ay, truly, my dear young lady,—good and reasonable hope that these villains have been watched and will be followed. Be of good cheer, and trust in Heaven. This bloodhound thought to find his vessel at the island, but the saints have befriended us, and the vessel has not yet come. All will go well, mistress,—such wicked men shall not prevail against the shield of innocence."

"The fire blazes cheerily, Mistress Coldcale—I pray thee intreat our lady to come ashore," called out Cocklescraft from a distance.

"Arouse thee, child, I shall be at thy side," said the dame; "it may be discreet not to provoke the Skipper—he is a harsh man and may be rude, if we be stubborn."

"Mother of Grace, sustain me!" said Blanche, as her frame shook from head to foot, and she grasped the arm of her friendly attendant. "Even as thou shalt advise, I walk, Bridget—I pray thee hold me," she added, as, raising herself on her feet, her loose and disordered tresses fell over her wan cheek and covered her breast and shoulders. "Oh, God, this trial will craze my brain!"

"Do not sink, dear child—thou needest fire, and

this barbarous Captain hath provided it—pray thee, be of stout heart, and trust in coming help."

Encouraged by the support of her companion, Blanche feebly tottered towards the bow of the boat, and thence landed on the beach. Whilst she leaned upon Mistress Coldcale's arm and advanced towards the fire, Cocklescraft came forward to meet her; and as he was about to address her in that tone of light salutation in which he had heretofore spoken, he was arrested in his first words, by the maiden flinging herself upon her knees, immediately at his feet, and looking up in his face with her eyes bedimmed with tears, as she cried out for mercy—

"Spare me!" she exclaimed—"Oh, spare a wretched girl, who has never imagined thought, nor spoken word of harm against you. Save me from a broken heart and bewildered brain—from misery, ruin and disgrace! If I, or any friend of mine have ever given you offence, on my knees and in the dust, I intreat forgiveness:—pardon,—pardon a fault whereof I have ever been unconscious. If one touch of pity dwell in your bosom, oh think of the miserable being at your feet and send her back to her home. Land me but on yonder shore, and I will, morning and evening, remember you in prayers and invoke blessings on your head!"

"This posture doth not become our queen," said Cocklescraft, stooping to raise the maiden to her feet, who shrinking from his touch crouched still lower to the earth. "This is but a foolish sorrow. Do I not love thee, Blanche? Ay, by the virgin! and mean to do well by thee. I have stuffs of price

on board the Escalfador, which shall trick thee out as gloriously as a queen indeed:—our dame here, shall ply her skill at the needle to set thee forth quickly. And then that pretty robe of crimson and minever which unthinkingly you did refuse, you shall wear it yet, girl. I have chains of gold and jewels rare, to make you gay as gaudiest flower of the field. I will bear you to an enchanted island, where slaves shall bend before you to do your bidding, and where you shall have store of wealth to scatter with such profusion as in dreams you have never even fancied. We will abide in a sea-girt tower upon a sunny cliff, and through your window shall the breeze from the beautiful, blue Atlantic fan you to evening slumbers. My gay bark shall be your servant, and ride, at your command, upon the wave; whilst our merry men shall take tribute from all the world, that thou mayst go braver and more daintily. Cheer up, weeping mistress; your mishap is not so absolute as at first you feared. Thy hand, lass!"

Blanche sprang to her feet with a sudden energy, and retreating a pace from her persecutor, cast upon him a look of resolute and indignant pride:

"Base wretch," she said, "I dare to spurn your suit. Defenceless as I stand here, a weak and captive maid,—if it be the last word I have to utter,—I abhor you, and your loathsome offer." Then relapsing into that tone of grief from which this momentary impulse had drawn her, she added, "Did you think—did you think, Master Cocklescraft, when you stole me from my father's house, that fair speech from you, or promise of gold, could win me to be your wife?

Oh, sir, if, in that error, you have heaped the sin of this deed upon your soul, quickly learn that not all the gold of all the mines, nor longest wooing, nor promise of a kingdom, if that were yours to give, might persuade me,—though the speaking of the word should lift me from abject misery or the pangs of death,—to give a favourable word to your suit. With holy faith and saddest reverence, I call my guardian, the ever-blessed virgin Therese, to hear my vow;—I never will be thine."

"A boat, a boat!" cried out the voice of the man at the lower point of the island,—and instantly this painful interview was at an end. The seamen had since their landing been busy in depositing the body of the mate in a shallow grave, and had just set up a wooden cross, formed of the boughs of trees, to mark the spot, when the alarm from the look-out reached them. Cocklescraft repaired, with all haste, to the end of the island, and was soon aware, not only of the boat to which the seaman alluded, but also of a second of the same description, dimly seen in the haze, at no great distance behind the first. They were both holding their course towards the mouth of St. Mary's river, close on the eastern margin, as if their purpose were to proceed down the Potomac. St. George's Island lay abreast the opposite or western shore, and it was therefore necessary for these boats, if they were destined for the island, to take a course nearly across the entire breadth of the river at its mouth. As, at the moment when first descried, they gave no indication of such a purpose, Cocklescraft, (who did not doubt that these were parties in

pursuit of him) began to assure himself that his retreat to the island was not discovered, and that his pursuers were most probably bound to St. Jerome's. Again he cast a troubled eye over the waters, in the hope to perceive the brigantine, for which, at this moment, he looked with increased solicitude, as he had reason to apprehend that, on her voyage up the Potomac, she must pass the boats that were apparently on their voyage downward. For some time, he gazed keenly abroad in silence, or muttering only inaudible curses on the delay of Rob with the Escalfador, and on his own folly in committing the vessel to the Cripple's guidance. It was not long before the boats had reached the Potomac. Here, instead of shaping their further voyage, as the Skipper had been led to expect, towards the Chesapeake, they took the opposite course and stood directly for the island. They were near enough to make it apparent to Cocklescraft that each was filled with armed men, and if any doubts of their hostile purpose had existed before, it now became altogether unquestionable. Hastening towards the spot where the yawl was drawn up on the strand, the buccaneer ordered his crew immediately to their posts. Blanche and Mistress Bridget were forced to take their former seats, and the boat being shoved off, was directed towards the point of land opposite the western extremity of the upper island,—then only known as a nameless sandy flat, thinly covered with pines, but of late rendered somewhat more familiar to public repute, by the comfortable accommodation with which it has

been provided as a place of refuge against the heats of summer, and for the luxury of its bathing.

"By St. Iago, we are hotly followed!" said the retreating and anxious rover, as he now measured the size of the barges with his eye, whilst they shot out from behind the cover of the extreme eastern point of the islands and disclosed themselves in full pursuit; "and with swift craft, well manned. The devil hath sent us a dead calm,—otherwise, with this rag of canvass, I would show these lurchers the trick of a sea-fight: as it is, we must give them a clean pair of heels. Oh, that my good brigantine were here! I would defy twenty barges, and sweep through them all. Lustily, good fellows! slacken not:—halter and harquebuss are on our track; we die by hemp or leaden bullet if we are overtaken—so pull amain. You have been in as great straits before and found a lucky ending. We shall see Rob anon, when this mist shall lift its curtain: and, once in sight of our good bark, we shall fight our way to her side. Courage, friends!"

In this strain of exhortation, Cocklescraft spoke at intervals to his men, whilst anxiously looking to the rear he watched the progress of his pursuers and seemed to count every wave that broke against their bows. Not even his experienced eye could tell which of the struggling rivals in this race had the swiftest keel. So intense became the competition that soon all other cares were absorbed in the engrossing thought of the escape. The boat's crew fell into silence, and when the necessary orders were delivered they were spoken in the low tone of familiar con-

versation, as if the speakers were afraid they might be overheard by the enemy in their wake. If the concern of the leader and his crew in their present condition was eager, still more did it awaken the feelings of Blanche Warden and Mistress Bridget. The maiden seemed to have forgotten her tears; occupied with a more absorbing emotion than her grief, she found herself renovated in strength, and by degrees assuming an upright posture in the boat, whence, with an ardent and unblenching gaze, she kept her eye fixed upon the barges that came like angel-messengers to her deliverance.

Two miles or more yet lay between the parties in the chase. Cocklescraft steered towards the upper headland of Piney Point—to use its modern designation—and reaching this, found a long sweep of the river ahead of him, bounded by a smooth strand unmarked by creek or inlet. At one moment he thought of running for the Virginia shore, and there, by doubling back upon his pursuers, aim to win the Capes of Potomac, in the hope of meeting the Escalfador; but he could not count sufficiently on the speed of his boat to risk so dangerous a hazard.—

"If I can but keep my way till night, I shall baffle these hounds upon my track;" he said, in pondering over the emergency. "A weary day it is before me, and a long run till night. Perchance, I may meet some stouter craft upon the water, some up-river trader, whom I may easily master,—and once on a broader deck, I will fight these landsmen with all their odds against me. Or, at the worst, I shall run ashore, if I am pressed, and take to the thicket,

where at least, till day be done, I may lie concealed, and after find my way to the Chapel."

In this perplexity and doubt he still pursued his voyage. The point which he had passed momentarily screened him from the view of his pursuers; but in due time the barges were again seen across the white sandy flat, apparently, by the effect of that optical deception which may be observed on a low shore, raised above the level of the land and looming to twice their natural size.

"They come, they come—Heaven be praised, they gain upon us!" involuntarily ejaculated Blanche, as she rose from her seat and gazed across the extremity of the point.

"Not so fast, my merry queen," said Cocklescraft, for the moment attracted by the lively utterance of the maiden; "they do not gain upon us, mistress: you forget that they must weather the point by that same circuit which you may see traced by our wake. Thou wilt be a better sailor anon. Steadily, good lads! do not overwork yourselves; we are likely to have a long run of it."

Now, for some miles, the chase continued with little diminution of the space between the parties. At length it began to be perceptible that the barges drew nearer to the object of their pursuit: the shortened stroke of the oar denoted the flagging strength of the labouring Buccaneer, whilst the unabated vigour of the pursuers showed that the chase was urged by men enured to the toil of rowing. Still, there was the energy of desperate men in the force

with which the flying band held on their way, and Cocklescraft did not yet abandon the hope of wearying down the strength of those from whom he fled. Another hour, and the barges still crept up nearer to their chase. A death-like stillness prevailed on board the latter, broken only by the monotonous dipping of the oar and its dull jar upon the boat, as the seaman, with unvarying time, turned it in the row-lock and repeated his stroke. Still nearer came the barges and nearer, with fearful certainty.

"They come within musket shot!" exclaimed Cocklescraft. "To the land, boys! we must even fight them on the land."

"Back your oars!" cried out Dauntrees, from the leading barge: "back, and lay to, or by St. Michael, I fire!"

A scream from Bridget Coldcale was, for a moment, the only answer that reached the ears of the Captain.

"To your feet, mistress!" said Cocklescraft, as seizing Blanche by the arm he placed her erect in the boat. "Fire at your peril!" was the reply he now gave to the accost of his enemy; "my crew sail under the protection of the Rose of St. Mary's. Have your weapons at hand!" he added, addressing his men; "we must e'en leave our boat, and this precious freight to these land-rats, and take to the wood. You cannot call me cruel, pretty maiden, —for I give you up, in pure courtesy, to your friends. You will remember the Master of the Escalfador as a gallant who would have made you mistress of as pretty a dowry as ever won maiden's good will.

We have had a merry morning of it, lady—I would it had been longer—but these churls behind forbid it: so, without more ceremony in the leave-taking—for thou seest I must needs be in haste—fare thee well, girl! Even without asking this favour, I kiss thy cheek. To the shore, lads!"

As he spoke, and made good his word by stooping over the maiden and enforcing her submission to this parting token of his gallantry, the boat struck the sand, and, in an instant, leader and crew had sprung into the shallow water and bounded to the shore, leaving but their wounded comrade and the maiden with her faithful companion on board of the boat. A volley was discharged from the nearest barge at the fugitives, but the result served to show that the common deception of distance on the water had misled the party who fired: the balls fell short of their mark, and the persons aimed at were soon out of sight in the forest that covered the shore.

Upon the land side an enterprise was afoot of almost equal excitement to that upon the water. The party of horsemen that had crossed with Colonel Talbot to the opposite shore of St. Mary's River, submitting to the guidance of Arnold de la Grange and his old Indian comrade, were conducted along a path which threaded the thickets lying around the head of an inlet, that now bears the name of St. George's, and thence took a course down the peninsula towards Piney Point. Whilst galloping upon the further margin of the inlet by which the eastern side of the peninsula was formed, and yet two miles from the point, they perceived the yawl of Cockles

craft stretching across from the islands towards the main. A halt was immediately called by the commander of the party, and they were ordered to screen themselves and their horses from observation amongst the wild shrubbery of the spot.

"It is even as the Cripple of St. Jerome's told us," said Talbot. "This is the boat of the Olive Branch with her thieving knaves. You may know the Skipper, Master Verheyden, by his flat bonnet and scarlet jacket. See, he looks sternward and waves his hand to his rowers as if he would hasten their speed."

"And I see the forms of cowering females at his feet," added Albert. "The boat makes for the point. A blessing on the day!—these marauders design to land. Oh, happy chance that we are here! let us not delay to set upon them."

"Hold, Master Secretary! be not too eager," replied the leader. "Think you they will land, if they see us lying at lurch to attack them? No, no! our honest friend of the Bowl hath stolen away their brigantine, and the cheated felons, all agaze at their mishap, are now seeking a hiding place where they may abide till night, and then, perchance, repair their misfortune by some other villany. We should mar our best hope if they but catch a glimpse of us. So, quiet, gentlemen; your impatience shall find action soon enough e'er we get home again. Ah, good luck, friends! see how bravely sets the wind of our fortune; yonder comes old Jasper Dauntrees, like a trusty comrade, hot in chace, with his barge trimmed to the nicety of an arrow's feathering. He follows close in the wake of the Freebooter—and at his

heels, by my faith, there opens now, from behind the point of the island, his second party. Push for it, old friend! The good powers cheer thee in thy race!"

"Master Cocklescraft," said Arnold, "will not be so fool-hardy as to land on that deep sand with two helpless women to take care of, whilst he has a soldier like Captain Dauntrees to track his march."

"You are right, Arnold," returned Talbot, after watching the leading boat for a space; "the Skipper steers wide of the beach, and means to make a run of it up the river: he is already passing by the point. Gentlemen, to horse again! we will get back towards the highland and there keep even speed with the chace, and, like well trained hawks, stoop upon our quarry in the nick of time. Beware the open ground, that the Skipper may not see us on the heights."

In obedience to this command, the party set out quickly, by a retrograde movement, towards the upland which, although somewhat remote from the river, gave them, at frequent intervals, where the cleared forest allowed, an extensive range of river view. Having gained this height, they traversed it in a line parallel to the course of the shore, ever directing their anxious eyes to the fierce contention between the boats for mastery in the race. Occasionally, in this progress, ravines were to be passed, a piece of marshy land to be avoided, or an open field, which might expose the party to the view of the boatmen, to be shunned. In all such passages of the journey, the services of Pamesack and of Arnold de la Grange contributed greatly to the speed with

which this scouting company were enabled to keep pace with the rapid flight of the boats. With deep and intense speculation did the horsemen watch the progress of the chace, and measure the distance between the fugitives and their pursuers. Albert Verheyden, almost counting the strokes of the Skipper's oars as their wet blades flashed the sunbeams upon his sight, rode, for some time in despairing silence.

"He loses not an inch!" he breathed to himself, as his thought ran upon the Freebooter's chance of evading his enemies; "he has men at the oar used to the sleight, and he will tire down his pursuers." Again he gazed, and with no better hope. But when, after losing sight of the river for a long space whilst the party galloped over a piece of wooded low ground, he came again in view of the boats, joy beamed from every feature of his face as he exclaimed to his companions, "We advance upon his flight and shorten the space between! The Skipper grows weary of his labour:—thanks to the Captain and his noble comrades, the day begins to brighten on our enterprise."

"We will halt here," said Talbot, reining up his steed upon a summit which commanded a near view of that region, recognised at the present day as Medley's Neck; "the game is nearly run down—and presently will come our time to speak a word of comfort to this renegade spoiler. He strains for yonder point, as if there he meant to land. By the body of Saint Ignatius! it is a wise choice he has made. We have him, if his folly be so bold as to touch that strand—we have him in a trap. He comes—he comes, driving headlong into our hands. Follow!"

Without waiting to marshal his troop, and even without looking behind, Talbot spurred his horse to a gallop, and plunged into the forest which covered the lowland even down to the river brink.

As Cocklescraft and his band deserted their boat and fled into the wood, Dauntrees with the barges drove rapidly in upon the shore. A loud huzza from his men announced the recapture of the maiden and Mistress Bridget. The Captain himself, by the aid of a boat-hook, made a spring from his barge with an agility that would not have passed unapplauded even at an earlier period of his life, and was the first to board the Skipper's abandoned yawl.

"God bless thee, gentle damsel!" he exclaimed as he eagerly seized Blanche by both hands and almost lifted her into his arms, whilst the maiden, with scarce less alacrity,—her eyes laughing through the big drops that rolled down her cheeks,—threw her head upon his breast, and sobbed with convulsive joy—"God bless thee, dear Mistress Blanche! we will make your father a happy man again. And you, old sweetheart, Bridget, they would have stolen *you* away! By my troth, that Trojan war and rape of Helen the poets tell of, was but a scurvy adventure compared with this!—Lieutenant," he added, almost in the same breath, "leave six files with our oarsmen to guard the boats; and see that they draw off from the shore into a fathom water, there to await our signal when we return. The rest of the men will push forward on the track of the runaways. Follow, comrades; we have no time to lose."

As the Captain spoke, he was already pushing his

way into the wood, on the footsteps of the retreating pirates, at the head of some dozen files of musqueteers. In another moment, the two females were left alone with the boats and their appointed guard.

"Spread yourselves across the neck," said Arnold de la Grange, as with a small division of the horsemen he had now reached a position not more than half a mile from the Point. "Pamesack, creep down on the shore of Britton's Bay, and report whatever comes in sight. The first man who finds the enemy will discharge his firelock. Scatter, gentlemen, scatter."

This little party of scouts were at the next moment extending their line across the extremity of Medley's Neck, and cautiously drawing towards the Point. Some distance in their rear was to be seen Talbot and the rest of the horsemen moving at a walk, in a compact body, upon the trail of the ranger's advance, and silently awaiting the signal by which they were to be guided to the quarter where their attack was to be made. After a short period of suspense, the report of a carbine, from the direction taken by Pamesack, arrested the general attention, and, on the instant, Albert, with three or four companions, set off at high speed towards the spot. On reaching the margin of the little bay which formed one confine of the neck of land, he discovered, advancing at a quick pace, though yet some distance off, the handful of men whom the wild adventure of the Skipper had brought into these desperate circumstances. They were in close array, armed with pikes, and led forward by their reckless captain. The confidence with

which they hurried upon their march seemed to indicate an unconsciousness of any foe except the party in their rear. This conviction was now instantly changed, as they became aware of the presence of Verheyden and his friends. Staggered by this unexpected disclosure, they were observed to halt for a moment, as if to receive some counsel from their chief, and then to advance with a steadiness that indicated prompt and desperate resolve. Their ranks were formed with more precision; their pace gradually quickened, as they came nearer to their enemy; and having approached so near as to enable either side to hear the commands of the other, Albert could distinctly recognize the voice of Cocklescraft exhorting them to the onset. In another moment, they set up the war-cry which they had learned from the Spaniards of the Gulf, and which had grown to be their own, from the recollections of the bloody frays with which it was associated—"A la savanna, perros!—to the field, dogs!"—and thus shouting, anticipated the attack of their enemies by themselves striking the first blow.

Talbot had delayed to follow Verheyden, only until he could assure himself that the signal shot truly announced the presence of Cocklescraft's party. This was rendered certain by a messenger who rode back to report the fact, and, without loss of time, the commander of the troop repaired to the scene of the assault. The pirates had already forced the little party of horsemen to give ground, when Talbot reached the spot.

"Upon them, gentlemen," he cried aloud, without

halting to form his men; and, in an instant was seen, opening his way through the pikes of the buccaneers with his sword. Albert Verheyden, leading on the little band of untrained cavalry, followed with impetuous haste in the track of his commander. The compact array of the pirates being broken, a confused pell-mell fight ensued, with sword, pike and pistol, which was marked by various success. Two or three of the horsemen were thrown to the ground, and as many of the seamen slain. Albert's horse was killed by a pistol-shot, and the rider for a moment was brought into imminent peril. Cocklescraft, animated as much by revenge, as by a determination to sell his life at a dear price, no sooner perceived the prostrate Secretary than he sprang upon him, and would have done the work of death, if Arnold de la Grange, who had followed Albert's footsteps through the fray, had not thrown himself from his horse and rushed to his comrade's rescue. He arrived in time to avert the stroke of the Skipper's sword, by interposing his carbine, and, at the same moment, seized Cocklescraft by the shoulder and dragged him backward to the earth. The active seaman was, in an instant, again upon his feet, but before he could renew the fight with effect, he found himself overwhelmed by the musqueteers, whose unobserved approach now put an end to the struggle.

"Hands off!" exclaimed Cocklescraft, shaking from him some two or three assailants, who had now crowded upon him, as the blood of a recent wound over the eye trickled down his cheek; "hemmed in and overnumbered, I surrender:—you may do with me as you

will—I ask no favours at your hands." And saying this, he flung his sword, with a moody and sullen anger, upon the ground. "A fairer field on land or water, and by St. Iago! we would have disputed it with you till set of sun. We came not prepared for this fight—we have neither arms nor ammunition to cope with an equal force, much less with the swarm that you have brought on horse and foot against this little boat's crew. Take your victory and make the best of it!"

"Silence!" said Dauntrees with the habitual calmness of an old soldier: "Call your men to the foot of yonder tree, or I may prick them thither with a halbert."

Under a chestnut hard by, the remnant of the buccaneers, amounting to not more than seven men beside their leader, were assembled. Some of them bore the marks of the severity of the conflict in wounds upon their persons. Three of the Skipper's men were found dead upon the field. Their opponents had escaped with better fortune. Two only were found severely though, it was believed, not mortally wounded;—a few others slightly. A guard was detailed to conduct the prisoners to the boat; the dead were hastily buried in the wood, and the wounded borne on the shoulders of their comrades to the point of embarcation.

It was already afternoon when victors and vanquished were bestowed in due order in the boats. The horsemen had by this time set forward on their homeward journey, eager to report the good tidings of the day. The captured yawl, manned with a pro-

per complement of rowers, was consigned to the maiden and her faithful Bridget, attended by the Secretary and Captain Dauntrees—the former of whom, we may imagine, had many things to say to the maiden, which, however agreeable to the narrator, would make but dull entertainment on our pages.

All matters being now disposed for sailing, the squadron of boats, led by the yawl, put off in order from the shore, and, with moderate speed, bent their course towards the anxious little city.

Before sundown the maiden was placed in her father's longing arms on the little wharf of the Rose Croft, and, in due time, the prisoners were marched through a crowd of gaping townspeople into the Fort of St. Mary's.

CHAPTER XVI.

No more the slave of human pride,
Vain hope and sordid care,
I meekly vow'd to spend my life
In penitence and prayer.

THE HERMIT OF WARKWORTH.

Oh were I free, as I have been,
And my ship swimming once more on the sea,
I'd turn my face to fair England,
And sail no more to a strange country.

OLD BALLAD.

DURING the day occupied by the events narrated in the last chapter, the Cripple of St. Jerome's remained in the dwelling of father Pierre. His misanthropy had relaxed into a kinder tone, and contrition had spread a sadness over his mind. In this temper he had made his shrift, and abjured the lawless life and evil fellowship into which his passions had plunged him, and now offered up a sincere and needful vow of penitence, to which he was resolved to devote the scant remainder of his days. The good priest did not fail to encourage the convertite in his wholesome purpose, nor to aid him with such ghostly counsel as was likely to strengthen his resolution. At

the period of life to which the Cripple had attained, it is no difficult task to impress upon the mind the value of such a resolution. When age and satiety have destroyed the sense of worldly pleasure, the soul finds a nourishment in the consolations of religion, to which it flies with but slight persuasion; and however volatile and self-dependent youth may deride it, the aged are faithful witnesses to the truth, that in the Christian faith there is a spell to restore the green to the withered vegetation of the heart, even as the latter rain renovates the pastures of autumn.

The Proprietary had directed the brigantine to be brought from Mattapany to St. Mary's, and she had, in consequence, been anchored in the harbour, a short distance from the quay, before Dauntrees had returned from his late expedition: the men left by Cocklescraft to navigate her were held on board as prisoners, under a small guard from the Mattapany Fort. The provincial court, the chief judicial authority of the government, had assembled on the same day, with the intention to continue its sessions until the cases of the conspirators were disposed of. The sitting of this court had attracted, from all quarters of the province, an unusually large crowd of attendants; and the town was accordingly filled with farmers, planters and craftsmen from the interior, who, in character of suitors, witnesses, men of business, or mere seekers of news, occupied every place of public accommodation.

Such was the state of things at the close of the day to which we have referred. The faction ad-

verse to the Proprietary, notwithstanding the vigilance with which they were watched, still found means for private conference. A few of the principal men who had not yet fallen under the suspicion of the public authorities, assembled in familiar guise under the roof of Chiseldine, and there consulted upon their affairs. The hope of rescuing Fendall and his companions by force, although somewhat depressed by recent events, was not abandoned. There were some sufficiently bold still to encourage this enterprise, and they spoke confidently of the assistance of friends, now in the port, who were anxious to bring about an immediate conflict with the Proprietary. It was deemed essential to the success of this attempt that the Olive Branch should be got into the possession of the conspirators: without the aid of the brigantine, neither the escape of the prisoners, nor the assistance of their confederates on the opposite shore of the Potomac could be relied on, even if all the other chances turned up favourably to the design.

These topics were duly debated in conclave, and the result was a determination to leave the enterprise in the hands of those who had projected it, either to be pursued or abandoned as the means at their command might counsel. With this conclusion the restless spirits, who had met at Chiseldine's, retired to organise their plans amongst their kindred malcontents throughout the town.

On the following morning when the hour for commencing business drew nigh, an unwonted throng of

customers frequented the tap-room of the Crow and Archer. There was but little of that cheerfulness which usually characterizes such a resort: the occupants of the place seemed to be chiefly engaged with matters that rendered them thoughtful, and their conferences were held in under tones; many loitered through the room in silence; and it was manifest that the aspect of public affairs had impressed all with a sense of the weightiness of the issues which were pending. The concourse was no less conspicuous upon the quay. Here little knots of burghers and inland inhabitants, sorted according to the complexion of their political sentiments, whether of hostility or attachment to the Proprietary, were scattered about in quiet communings, and exchanging distrustful and hostile glances as they came within the sphere of each other's observation. The yawl of the Skipper lay secured to the wharf by a rope, and the Escalfador, scarce a cable's length out in the stream, was near enough to present to the view of the townspeople the sentinels that paced her deck, and kept guard over the remnant of the pirate band, who were yet detained on board until their presence might be required by the authorities.

The arrival of Lord Baltimore at the Town House attended by Albert Verheyden and the greater number of the members of the Council, as it indicated his Lordship's intention to examine the prisoners in person, served to increase the public interest in the events of the day, and to draw a considerable portion of the crowd into the immediate neighbourhood of the Hall of Justice. The Proprietary with his friends

took possession of a chamber opposite to that occupied by the court, where they were soon joined by the sturdy old Collector who, with an erect and vigorous carriage, and a face flushed with mingled resentment and pride of manhood aroused by the recent events, rode up to the door and alighted amidst the salutations of his townsmen and the clamorous expressions of their joy at the good fortune which had restored him his daughter. A brief interval brought father Pierre, conducting Rob of the Bowl, to the same spot, and by order of the Proprietary they were both admitted into the chamber.

The prisoners had not yet arrived. In the mean time the Council were occupied with such inquiries as the presence of Albert Verheyden suggested. The appearance and demeanour of the Cripple of St. Jerome's engrossed the chief interest of the assembly. His age, his deformity, his singularly harsh and shrewd features, the extraordinary mystery of his life, his connexion with the ruffians of the Chapel, his apparent contrition, amounting to melancholy, —above all, his presence in this conclave, amongst persons with whom he had never before exchanged a word, were circumstances of a nature to throw around him the eager regard of the bystanders. There was a peculiarly subdued and sorrowful expression in his countenance, as he gazed with silent intensity, upon the features of Albert Verheyden and listened to his story of the disasters of that night of horrors, in which Rob had first become acquainted with him. The old man's lip quivered and

his eye glistened with a tear, as he dwelt upon the tones of the Secretary's voice, and watched the changes of his countenance. At length, whilst the Secretary still continued his eventful narrative, unable longer to control his feelings or restrain his eagerness to catch every word that fell from Albert's lips, he heaved an involuntary but deep sigh, and muttered, loud enough to be heard by every one in the apartment—"Oh, God, I have been reserved for this deed!—in mercy, have I been spared to save his life." After a pause, he added in a voice of loud and fervent entreaty—"I pray you, gentlemen, raise me to the table that I may look him nearer in the face:—my eyes are old and dim;" he continued, wiping away the tear with his hand,—"this seared and maimed trunk holds me too near the earth;—it hath placed me below my fellow man and taught my spirit to grovel—to grovel," he repeated with a bitter emphasis—"in the very mire of the basest fellowship.—Lift me on the table, I beseech you.—I have saved his life!—the saints be thanked, I have saved his life!" he uttered with a wild gesticulation. "Albert, I had made up my mind to save it with loss of my own!—I had, boy!"

The strange frenzy that for the time seemed to possess the deformed old man, the wild glance of his eye and the nervous tone, almost of raving laughter, with which he ejaculated these last words, gave rise to an instant doubt of the sanity of his mind; but in a moment he subsided into a calmer state, and resumed his original self-command.

Upon a sign from the Proprietary his request was

complied with, and he was lifted upon the table that occupied the middle of the room.

"Go on, boy," he continued, as soon as he was adjusted in this position; then suddenly checking himself for the familiarity of the address, "I crave pardon—I forget—Master Verheyden," he added, choking with the utterance of the name, as now within a few feet of the Secretary he still more narrowly gazed upon his face—"I pray thee, go on!"

When the Secretary had concluded his narrative, a deep silence prevailed throughout the room, and all eyes were bent upon the Cripple in expectation that he had something to disclose which all were anxious to hear. He however remained mute, still fixing his gaze upon Albert; and when the Secretary casually turned his back upon him, he reached forth his hand and caught the skirt of the young man's cloak, with an evidently unconscious motion, as if he sought by this constraint to prevent the Secretary from leaving him.

The Proprietary at length, as much struck with the deportment of the Cripple as the rest who witnessed it, and hoping to draw from him some history of himself, addressed him in a tone in which the severity of rebuke seemed to have been softened by the anxious interest he took in the endeavour to learn more of the singular person to whom he spoke. It was therefore with a grave, though scarcely stern manner that Lord Baltimore accosted him:

"Master Robert Swale," he said, "the Secretary's narrative which we have just heard has a dreadful import: nor is it coloured by a distempered

fancy. We are all witnesses to facts connected with this fearful tale that leave no room to doubt the scrupulous truth of all that has been told——"

"True—in every syllable, true!" interrupted Rob, with quick assent. "As God shall judge us, it is all true."

"It is a tale," continued the Proprietary, "fraught with crimes of ruthless men who, we find, have lived in near companionship with you. Long has the province been frightened with stories of wicked rites celebrated in the Black Chapel,—as our people have been taught to call that accursed house. The common terror could solve the mystery only by referring it to the acts of the Fiend, and it has ascribed to *you* some fearful intercourse with evil spirits."

"It hath—it hath, and with reason! mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa!" muttered Rob, as he vehemently struck his bosom with his open palm.

"More sober eyes have seen in your sequestered life and rare communion with your fellow men, but the evidences of a mind soured by adversity—a mind, it would seem, not so humbly cast as your condition might infer, but stricken, as the common belief has signified, by some heavy blow of fortune."

A stifled groan spoke the listener's apprehension of the Proprietary's words.

"All have been deceived: you have not lived that secluded life which in charity many have imputed to you. No sorcery nor witchcraft hath wrought these terrors, but the trickery of lawless ruffians; and what was deemed your solitude, it is now confessed, was active and commanding fellowship in this den

of robbers. Thou art too far journeyed in the vale of years to be reproved, even if time, which seldom fails to do his office, had not already been the avenger of the past. Your interposition in behalf of the Secretary's life, your removal of the brigantine and prompt repairing hither, as well as rumours, which I trust are true, of clear shrift and penitential vow, announce an honest though a late purpose of amendment. We think you owe it now to the consummation of this good purpose, that you divulge all it concerns us to know of that wicked haunt, the Wizard's Chapel, the scene of so much grief and crime, and of its inmates. Speak freely, old man."

"My Lord," answered Rob, with a calm though somewhat tremulous voice; "the story of my life I have confided to this holy man. Until my sand is run—would that its stream were spent!—that story lies in his bosom under the seal of the confessional. I dare not again rehearse it:—when I am gone he will tell it. It will be heard with curses by many—I deserve them;—but if a life clouded by disgrace and stung with misery may atone for a deed of passion, I pray, with an humble spirit, that my story may raise one voise of pity—but it doth not concern us to speak of this," he said as in deep emotion he paused for some moments with his hand closely pressed across his eyes—"these are unaccustomed tears, my Lord,—I have not wept before to-day this many a long year.

"What concerns my coming to the province, the life I have led here and the history of the Black House," he resumed after an interval in which he

had regained his composure—"of these, I have no scruple to speak. Sixteen years ago, my Lord, I sailed from a port on the other side of the Atlantic, with some little store of wealth consisting chiefly of jewels. My destination was the islands: my name was hidden from the world, and I had hoped to hide myself. Disasters at sea drove us upon this coast, where in a winter's storm, such as I have never known but that, our ship was wrecked. I know not who survived—I only know that it pleased Heaven for my sins, to prolong a life that I could have better parted with than any who found their grave beneath the waters. I chanced to save the larger portion of my valuables, and, on a raft of floating spars, was drifted into the Chesapeake, where a fisherman took me up almost lifeless, famished and starved with cold. He put me down at St. Jerome's—I had no wish to face my fellow men,—and, for such hire as I gave him, provided me with comforts, the scant comforts my condition needed, in that forsaken house, which then was terrible, as it hath been since—the house where Paul Kelpy murdered his own family. There, my Lord, I lived a solitary lodger, with no attendant near me except an aged woman, who afterwards abandoned me and took up her habitation at Warrington on the Cliffs:—she hath of late again returned. That winter passed away in suffering—ay, to the full measure of my deserts—and when spring came, my frosted limbs had rotted off, and I lay on my pallet that wretched, deformed and unsightly thing thou seest me now. There, for many weary years, I dwelt, a man

of sin and misery. Use made my state familiar, and I began to think that my penance would, at last, restore my peace of mind. In this lone spot, from which all the world turned away with shuddering, I did not dream that worldly passions could again be awakened. But it so fell out that, four years ago, a band of buccaneers in a trim brigantine, led by this ravening wolf Cocklescraft, tempted their fortune in these waters. They came in the disguise of traders, pitched upon the Chapel as their lurking place, won me to their purpose of unlawful commerce, and drove their craft with such success as you, my Lord, have seen. I consorted with them, first because they were outlawed men, and in that thought I took pleasure;—there was sympathy, the food for which my heart was hungered. They built me a lodge, and came and went as my familiar guests—and I made money by them. Can you wonder, my Lord, that I became their comrade? they made me their chief—I had their secret,—they gave me friendship, —and they brought me that devil's lure, gold—gold more than I had ever known before. Can you wonder, my Lord, that I became their companion? The treasures of the Chapel needed guarding from curious eyes. I made the spot to be doubly desecrated—we had visors, masks and strange disguises. I had the skill to compound chemical fires:—we had sentinels on the watch, and plied our game of witchcraft seasonably, till the whole country was filled with alarm——"

At this moment, some tumult from without at-

tracted the attention of the inmates of the chamber, and interrupted the further narrative of the Cripple.

At a distance, in the direction of the Fort, was seen a guard of some ten or twelve musqueteers advancing along the principal street of the city, led by Captain Dauntrees in person, and forming an escort to Cocklescraft and the prisoners who had been captured with him. Their progress was impeded by the crowd that thronged upon their path, amongst whom were some who scarcely attempted to conceal their sympathy with the prisoners, and who by signs, if not by words, cheered them with the hope of deliverance from their present durance. Nods of recognition were exchanged with Cocklescraft, and significant gestures made which he was at no loss to comprehend. The press increased as they drew near the door of the Town House, and in the disorder incident to the introduction of the prisoners into the building, more than one of the movers in the late sedition found an occasion to assure the master of the Escalfador, by a brief hint, of their readiness to co-operate in seizing the brigantine.

Cocklescraft and his crew were conducted into the presence of the Proprietary by Dauntrees, who, leaving the guard in the hall or passage way that separated the court-room from that occupied by the Council, ranged the prisoners within the apartment on either side of the door, which, being left open, exposed to view the musqueteers, who were thus in a position to do their duty in case any difficulty should render their interference necessary; whilst the crowd, at the same time, intruded itself into the

hall with such importunity as to leave but little space for the occupation of the guard.

Cocklescraft had lost none of the moodiness that characterized his demeanour after his surrender on the day previous. He was somewhat paler, owing to the wound upon his brow, which was now bound up with a bandage of black silk that, in some degree, enhanced the sickly aspect of his complexion. Still the fire of his spirit sparkled in his unquenched eye, and a sullen scowl, as he looked Albert Verheyden in the face, rested on his features. A slight but guarded expression of surprise flashed across his countenance when his glance encountered Rob of the Bowl. He was unaware of the presence of the Cripple in the Port; nor had he, up to this moment, ever entertained a suspicion that Rob had deserted him. The escape of the Secretary he imputed alone to the carelessness of the seamen; the failure of the brigantine to meet him at the rendezvous, he set down to accident and unskilfulness, and her presence now in the harbour to a cause altogether disconnected with any conjecture of treachery in the Cripple. Even the old man's presence before the Council, he attributed to force, and believed him to be, like himself, a prisoner. In this conviction he now found himself before the chief authorities of the province. He was, of course, weaponless; and as all eyes were turned upon him, he stood with folded arms, his cloth cap dangling from his hand, gazing in silent defiance upon the assembly. He meditated no purpose of defence to the charges which he expected to hear: the facts of his late outrage admitted none, and

the presence of the Secretary assured him that the crime he had attempted to perpetrate on All Soul's Eve had been divulged in all its enormity, and with such full identification of the actors in it as to render useless all attempt even at palliation.

The unabashed gesture of the Buccaneer, his confident port and look, even of scorn, provoked an instant emotion of resentment in the Proprietary as well as of the greater number of those who surrounded him.

"Viper!" he said, "dost thou approach us with this shameless front to brave our authority in the province! Does no sense of crime abash thy brow, that here, in the presence of those whom thou hast most foully wronged, thou showest thy dastardly face without a blush! Richard Cocklescraft, you came hither, as all men thought, a peaceful trader, and found the friendship of the Port accorded to you, without stint or question. Again and again you left us, and returned; and the townspeople ever gave you hearty welcome to their homes. How brief a span is it, since we saw you breaking bread and sharing the wine-cup with this aged father, whose daughter, execrable villain, thou soughtest to carry off by force, in the dead hour of the night? Hast thou not plotted against the life of the Secretary? Didst thou not murder the fisherman, bloody and remorseless man? Didst thou not, like a coward, strike at the gray hairs of this venerable man, when thou stol'st upon him in his sleep?"

"No!" replied the pirate leader, in a voice loud and angry, undaunted by the presence of the chief func-

tionaries of the province, and untamed by his captivity. "He lies who says I struck at the Collector! though, by St. Iago, Anthony Warden may claim no favour at my hands,—"

"Favour at thy hands!" exclaimed the Collector, who could not sit quiet whilst the Skipper spoke—"A boy, who undertakes to play at man's game, with men!—A boy, to prate me thus!"

"I pray you, Master Warden," interposed the Proprietary, mildly, "do not interfere."

"I struck not at the Collecter," repeated Cockles-craft; "I look to match my sword with men not spent with age. When others would have beaten this old man to the ground, I saved him. I plotted not against the Secretary's life," he continued, answering the accusations which the Proprietary had at random heaped upon him. "I slew the fisherman, as a hound that had been set to track my path. I carried away this old man's daughter, because I loved her. Are you answered, Lord Baltimore?"

"Impudent outlaw!" returned the Proprietary, with an excitement of speech altogether unaccustomed, "dost thou beard us with the confession of thy crimes? Have the laws of the province no terrors for thee?"

"I never acknowledged your Lordship's laws," retorted the seaman, scornfully. "I have lived above them—coming when I would, and going when it pleased me. By St. Anthony, your Lordship hath but a sorry set of lieges! You might do well to teach the better half of the freemen to remember that Charles Calvert claims to be Lord and master of this

province—they seem to have forgotten it. You think I am saucy, my Lord; I have but one master here—Old Rob of the Trencher, my fellow prisoner:—we will die in company."

"Peace, knave!" ejaculated Rob, in his former peevish voice of command. "I know thee and thy villanies of old. Never again call me comrade of thine. Thou shalt not depart in ignorance of the favour you owe me, Dickon Cocklescraft. Know that I saved the Secretary's life—that I gave back the daughter to her father's bosom——"

"Thou!" exclaimed Cocklescraft, with a deeper storm thickening on his brow. "Thou! didst thou betray me?"

"I foiled thee," replied Rob, as a vengeful smile played on his features, "in thy horrid plot;—I saved the boy's life—ha, ha! I saved his life!—and left thee on the island without a refuge—thy villany deserved it."

"Betrayed,—betrayed by thee!" vociferated the Pirate, as with the swift spring of the tiger he threw himself upon the Cripple, and seized the long knife from the old man's girdle, and plunged it deep into his bosom, shouting as he struck the blow, "By St. Iago, I have paid thee for it!"

The suddenness of the deed took all by surprise, and scarce a step was made, nor a hand raised to arrest the murderer, who, with a quickness that defied orderly resistance, turned towards the door, with the bloody weapon in his hand, and pronouncing aloud the watchword that seemed to electrify his men —"A la savanna!" rushed, at the head of his crew,

into the hall. The guards at the door were no less unprepared for resistance than the persons within, whilst the crowd in the hall gave ground, with that sudden panic which belongs to all unorganized masses of men, and fled tumultuously before the Buccaneer and his band—thus increasing the confusion and rendering it impossible for the weak guard of the hall, either to follow the fugitives with the necessary expedition to overtake them, or to fire upon them, without risk of greater injury to friend than foe.

As soon as Cocklescraft was seen on the open ground in front of the Town House, driving with headlong haste towards the quay, the partisans of Coode and Fendall, constituting a considerable number of those who frequented the spot, increased the disorder by a clamour which, under the show of pursuit, in truth retarded the movement of those who endeavoured to intercept the flying band. The momentary consternation in the chamber being over, the Proprietary and those around him, sprang from their seats and ran to the great door, whence they could witness the struggle of pursuit. Dauntrees, at the first moment, had repaired to his men, and was immediately busy in attempting to open a way through the crowd, in which he was greatly impeded by the tumultuous interference of the malcontents. Albert Verheyden, in the act of moving to leave the apartment, was recalled by the voice of the wounded man, and instantly returned to his side, where, with

father Pierre, he awaited, in anxious suspense, the recapture of the prisoners.

Meantime Cocklescraft furiously urged his onward course. He had snatched a sword in the crowd, with which he became a formidable enemy to all who crossed his path, and soon discovered, from their shouts, that his nearest pursuers were in fact aiding his escape. The only exception to this was Talbot and our old friend Arnold, who, foremost in the melee, had at one moment, as they sped down the bank, come in actual contact with the fugitives, and Talbot had exchanged more than one pass with Cocklescraft. The crowd thickened on the quay; shouts rent the air, and cries of encouragement and strife resounded from all sides.

The passage over the quay was opened—the boat gained, the rope severed, the oars in place,—and in another instant the buccaneers were in full flight upon their accustomed element. The musqueteers hasten to the wharf,—their small band jostled, pressed, and swayed by the encumbering crowd—an ineffectual volley is fired—Cocklescraft waves his hand in triumph—the Escalfador is won from the feeble resistance of her light guard, and the pirates are again upon their own deck. The cable is slipped, sail after sail drops from the yard or runs up along the mast —the brigantine swings round to a fair and stiff breeze under a cloudless heaven, and cleaves her way mid-stream towards the mouth of the river. A few harmless shot were fired from the fort, as she bounded past; and almost before the bewildered burghers were aware, she had swept beyond the limit of the harbour—her daring master standing at

the helm and looking back at the town, scarce able to realize the truth of his own escape, as he waved his bonnet in derision of the gaping crowd. Many eyes still lingered upon this fleeting vision, until the white sails of the Escalfador disappeared behind the projecting headland which opened to her prow the broad current of the Potomac.

Not all could note this stirring strife of flight. A melancholy attraction drew back the Proprietary and his council to the chamber. When Albert was recalled to the side of the wounded man, it was but to hear his own name pronounced in a whispered accent, and then to see the sufferer faint away. For some minutes, father Pierre and the Secretary, the only persons in the room, thought life was fled; but whilst they still watched, the light of the eye flickered upon them, and, by degrees, a sickly animation returned to the body. When Lord Baltimore and the others had gathered around, Rob was able to speak. His voice was faint, and his gaze was upon the Secretary.

"My web is wove," he said, in that figurative language which had grown to be his habitual form of expression. "Albert Verheyden thou look'st upon —upon thy father—William Weatherby—a man of crime—and misery. Thy hand, boy—thy lips upon my brow—there—there," he whispered, as his son, pale as a spectre and trembling with emotion, bent down over his prostrate trunk and kissed his forehead. "Pity me, my son, and forgive me for thy mother's sake. Poor Louise—Louise—" and with this name again and again breathed from his lips, when no other sound could be heard, his spirit was

gradually wafted from its mutilated and weary tenement of clay.

"I forgive thee—I forgive and pity!" breathed Albert, with sobs that shook his whole frame, as he threw himself upon the lifeless body of his father.

"My dear Albert, leave this place," said father Pierre; "let us go to the Chapel, and there thou may'st temper thy grief with prayer. His Lordship will take order for the disposal of the body. I have a paper which I was charged, when this event should take place—and in his reckoning it was not far off—to deliver into thy hands. Come, and when we have done our duty at the altar, I will give it thee."

With silent step and slow, Albert leaning on the arm of the priest, they left the Town House, and walked towards the little Chapel of St. Mary's.

CHAPTER XVII.

HERE ends my tale. We have no longer an interest to follow the fortunes of the personages who have been brought to view in this motlied narrative of trivial and tragic events. A brief memorandum will tell all that remains to gratify the inquiries of my readers.

After the crossings of fortune which we have read in the history of Albert and Blanche, we may presume the time, at last, came for the current of true love to run smooth as a glassy lake. The next festival at the Rose Croft found father Pierre in a prominent official position, and the maiden a blooming bride upon the arm of the happy Secretary.

The worldly wise will be pleased, perhaps, to learn that, after some most liberal appropriations to charitable uses, by way of purification of the more than doubtful uncleanness of the Cripple's wealth, Albert fell heir to no small hoard; and this gear, as it was generously distributed in acts of hospitality and bounty to the poor, we would fain hope the straitest casuist will allow, was not unjustly taken by the Secretary,—his title to it resting upon the will of William Weatherby, which was produced in due time by father Pierre.

As to the conspirators, they were losers in every way. First the Buccaneer and his Brigantine came not to their rescue; and secondly, the trials proceeded without interruption. Josias Fendall was fined in a very heavy sum, and imprisoned at the pleasure of the Proprietary. His brother and John Coode, from some apprehension of rousing too keenly the popular grudge, were more mildly dealt with. George Godfrey was sentenced to death, but finding favour upon the petition of his wife, had his punishment commuted into a rigorous confinement in the gaol of St. Mary's.

What became of the other confederates of Coode and Fendall, the records do not inform us; but we may infer that the dominant party in the province felt their authority too slender to prosecute them with much severity—

"They fear to punish, therefore do they pardon."

Touching our unfortunate friend of "the gentle craft," the warlike corporal, history happens to have embalmed his memory with the unction of a favourite, and to have consigned him to the notice of posterity with a distinctness of fame that would, if he could have contemplated it, have almost made him, in spite of his miseries, in love with rebellion. I find in the proceedings of the council, in the month of March following these events, the "the humble petition" of Edward Abbott, a "poor, distressed, and sorrowful penitent," who most dolorously complains of his insufferable confinement, meekly confessing his

sins, and affirming, by way of extenuation, that, in the commission of them, "he was so much in drink that he did not remember any thing either what was done or spoken at the time." And to this petition is appended the following entry,—

"The petitioner making his submission in open court, upon his knees begging pardon for his offence, the Justices are ordered to wave sentence passing against him, his Lordship having granted his pardon."

And so, gentle reader, good night! We part, I would even indulge the hope, but for a short period; after which we may find motive to look again into the little city and renew our acquaintance.

THE END.

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